



NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY

STUDY MATERIAL

PGELT

PAPER 3

Modules 1-4

POST GRADUATE



PREFACE

In the curricular structure introduced by this University for students of Post-Graduate degree programme, the opportunity to pursue Post-Graduate course in a subject is introduced by this University is equally available to all learners. Instead of being guided by any presumption about ability level, it would perhaps stand to reason if receptivity of a learner is judged in the course of the learning process. That would be entirely in keeping with the objectives of open education which does not believe in artificial differentiation.

Keeping this in view, study materials of the Post-Graduate level in different subjects are being prepared on the basis of a well laid-out syllabus. The course structure combines the best elements in the approved syllabi of Central and State Universities in respective subjects. It has been so designed as to be upgradable with the addition of new information as well as results of fresh thinking and analysis.

The accepted methodology of distance education has been followed in the preparation of these study materials. Co-operation in every form of experienced scholars is indispensable for a work of this kind. We, therefore, owe an enormous debt of gratitude to everyone whose tireless efforts went into the writing, editing, and devising of a proper lay-out of the materials. Practically speaking, their role amounts to an involvement in 'invisible teaching'. For, whoever makes use of these study materials would virtually derive the benefit of learning under their collective care without each being seen by the other.

The more a learner would seriously pursue these study materials the easier it will be for him or her to reach out to larger horizons of a subject. Care has also been taken to make the language lucid and presentation attractive so that they may be rated as quality self-learning materials. If anything remains still obscure or difficult to follow, arrangements are there to come to terms with them through the counselling sessions regularly available at the network of study centres set up by the University.

Needless to add, a great deal of these efforts are still experimental—in fact, pioneering in certain areas. Naturally, there is every possibility of some lapse or deficiency here and there. However, these do admit of rectification and further improvement in due course. On the whole, therefore, these study materials are expected to evoke wider appreciation the more they receive serious attention of all concerned.

Prof. (Dr.) Subha Sankar Sarkar
Vice-Chancellor

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POST GRADUATE : ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
[PG : ELT]

PAPER – 3
MODULES 1-4

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Topic

The first part of the paper is devoted to the study of the properties of the function $f(x)$ defined by the equation $f(x) = x + f(x^2)$. It is shown that $f(x)$ is a continuous function and that it satisfies the functional equation $f(x) = x + f(x^2)$ for all x in the domain of definition.

The second part of the paper is devoted to the study of the properties of the function $g(x)$ defined by the equation $g(x) = x + g(x^2)$. It is shown that $g(x)$ is a continuous function and that it satisfies the functional equation $g(x) = x + g(x^2)$ for all x in the domain of definition.

The third part of the paper is devoted to the study of the properties of the function $h(x)$ defined by the equation $h(x) = x + h(x^2)$. It is shown that $h(x)$ is a continuous function and that it satisfies the functional equation $h(x) = x + h(x^2)$ for all x in the domain of definition.

The fourth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the properties of the function $k(x)$ defined by the equation $k(x) = x + k(x^2)$. It is shown that $k(x)$ is a continuous function and that it satisfies the functional equation $k(x) = x + k(x^2)$ for all x in the domain of definition.

The fifth part of the paper is devoted to the study of the properties of the function $l(x)$ defined by the equation $l(x) = x + l(x^2)$. It is shown that $l(x)$ is a continuous function and that it satisfies the functional equation $l(x) = x + l(x^2)$ for all x in the domain of definition.



Module 1

Unit 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Grammar - Traditional, Structural and Generative Models	7-12
Unit 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Morphology and Morphophonemics	13-33
Unit 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Structural Syntax	34-86
Unit 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Implications for ELT	87-99

Module 2

Unit 5	<input type="checkbox"/> General Phonetics and Phonology	100-116
Unit 6	<input type="checkbox"/> Production of Speech	117-134
Unit 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Structural Phonology: Segmental and Supra-segmental Features	135-201
Unit 8	<input type="checkbox"/> Standards of Pronunciation and Teaching Implications	202-219

Module 3

Unit 9	<input type="checkbox"/>	Theories of Discourse	220-224
Unit 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Discourse	225-232
Unit 11	<input type="checkbox"/>	Discourse Analysis	233-241
Unit 12	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pragmatics	242-277

Module 4

Unit 13	<input type="checkbox"/>	Register	278-291
Unit 14	<input type="checkbox"/>	Style	292-302
Unit 15	<input type="checkbox"/>	Semantics	303-325
Unit 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	Genre Analysis	326-343

UNIT 1 □ GRAMMAR—TRADITIONAL, STRUCTURAL AND GENERATIVE MODELS

Structure

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Traditional School of Linguistics

1.1.1 The Latinate Fallacy

1.1.2 The Semantic Fallacy

1.1.3 The Logical Fallacy

1.1.4 The Fallacy of lack of explication

1.1.5 The Fallacy of mixing up different criteria

1.1.6 The written form Fallacy

1.1.7 The Prescriptive Fallacy

1.1.8 The Fallacy of ignoring language variation

1.2 Summary

1.3 Review Question

1.0 INTRODUCTION :

In the earlier modules we have talked about linguistic units like phoneme, syllable, morpheme and word. You have also been made aware of how these elements function within the overall framework of a linguistic system. The various linguistic processes at different levels of linguistic reality which involve these linguistic units in a complex and creative network of functioning have also been introduced to you. And we hope that you are getting more and more fascinated in discovering the various levels of linguistic communicative operation in a human language which we use and understand so easily and which is so easily taken for granted.

The moment we take a serious look into this apparently simple human entity called language we begin to realize how complex this system is and how creative and communicatively effective this mechanism is.

We will now move upto the level of Grammar. At this level our concern is with the way words are structured and organized into higher units like phrases, clauses and sentences. At this level we will have to explain issues like linear

relations between constituents of sentences along with the hierarchical interrelations between constituents. We will have to answer questions like why 'Poor John ran away' is a possible sentence in English but * John poor away ran' is not a sentence.

This will lead to a close study of

(a) various kinds of Grammar, and

(b) traditional, structural and generative models of Grammar.

In this course on syntax we will try to capture the structure of phrases (like noun phrases, adj phrases, adverb phrases, prepositional phrases, verb phrases, verbal groups), and clauses as well as sentences (like the simple sentence, the complex sentence and the compound sentence). And in doing so we will present the models of syntactic analysis of all the three paradigms of language study – the traditional, the structural and the transformational generative.

1.1 THE TRADITIONAL SCHOOL OF LINGUISTICS:

The term **traditional** in linguistics today is used as almost a blanket term covering about 2500 years of language study beginning with the pre-Socratic philosophers till the beginning of the 20th century, i.e. the time of Ferdinand de Saussure. During this vast span of language study we had the Greeks, the Romans, the 13th century Scholastic philosophers/Speculative grammarians, the 17th century Port Royal Grammarians in France, the great 18th century grammarians Leibniz and Sir William Jones due to whom we had the famous 19th century brand of linguistics known as comparative philology. Alongside this scholarly tradition of traditional linguistics we also had a tradition of school grammars which tried to capture the structural essence of linguistic configurations in human languages. When we refer to traditional grammars and their limitations we precisely mean this school tradition of grammars.

Traditional grammar, thus defined, did present a model of linguistic analysis which had a number of intrinsic weaknesses and limitations which are now known as fallacies in traditional grammar. In fact, the traditional model of syntactic analysis has been rejected because of these fallacies.

1.1.1 THE LATINATE FALLACY :

The traditional grammarians of English borrowed Latin grammar as the model for describing English or any other language. As a result, the grammar of English was written without any in-depth study of the linguistic facts of English. The English version of Latin grammar passed on as the grammar of English. For example, Latin has six case forms – Nominative, Vocative, Accusative, Genitive, Dative and Ablative. And as case is an inflectional category it is marked on the

nouns in Latin. The traditional grammarians of English maintain that English also has six case forms, though actually we have two case forms for English nouns – **John** (unmarked case) and **John's** (marked or possessive case) – and three case forms of English pronouns – **he**, **his**, and **him** (nominative, possessive and objective respectively). This shows that the case system of English was borrowed from Latin and imposed on English. The underlying belief was that languages belonging to the same family would have similar features, structures, and grammatical categories.

This fallacy of using the grammatical model of one language for the description of another is known, therefore, as the Latinate fallacy. Modern linguists would say every language is a unique system and, therefore, it has to be studied in its own right and merit.

1.1.2 THE SEMANTIC FALLACY :

The traditional grammarians used meaning in the definition or description of grammatical categories. This use of meaning as a tool or criterion in linguistic description makes grammar unscientific because meaning itself cannot be scientifically captured. Meaning is vague, context-bound and subjective.

Let us consider the definition of an interrogative sentence in traditional grammar. "An interrogative sentence is one that asks a question." Now, a sentence like "Could you pass me the salt?" is an interrogative sentence as we all know. But does it ask a question? Of course, not. It is actually making a request. The point is that such meaning-based definitions are misleading, fallacious and therefore, unscientific. The definition of an interrogative has to be form-based or structure-based and not meaning based. This is true of many definitions in traditional grammar being only meaning-based and thus fallacious.

1.1.3 THE LOGICAL FALLACY :

The traditional linguists held that the rules of grammar should be governed by the laws of logic. This belief they inherited from the speculative grammarians of the Middle Ages who thought that human language mirrored the universe and because the principles of logic governed the universe, they governed language also.

But we find that in every human language there are expressions/utterances which may not be considered valid from the point of view of logic. Expressions like 'rounder' or 'more perfect' are very common for the speakers of languages (as in English) though they are not logically valid (as something can be either round or not/either perfect or not). Therefore, such expressions by the native speakers of a language are linguistically well-formed and acceptable, irrespective of their logical validity. In English, the traditional grammarian's observation that it has three tense forms – past, present and future – is an example of logical fallacy. As there are three times – Past, Present and Future – there has to be three tenses. But we

know that English has no future tense; futurity is expressed with the help of various linguistic devices, like the use of modals, like **shall** or **will**, etc. Tense is an inflection and there is no future tense marked on an English verb.

In Bangla, for instance, we have three tenses —

Khai — eat (I eat)

Khelam — ate (I ate)

Khabo — shall eat (I shall eat)

And all the tenses are marked on the root verb **Kha** as inflections. But in English we have only the Present and the Past tense. The logic that three times will have to be represented by three tenses is not linguistically validated.

Please note here that this traditional statement regarding three tenses in English is also an illustration of Latinate fallacy as well as semantic fallacy.

In modern linguistics we say that there need not be always a one-to-one correspondence between tense and time. Time is a semantic category and Tense is a grammatical category and there may not be a logical one-to-one correspondence between the two. This is true of sex and gender and countability and number.

1.1.4 THE FALLACY OF 'LACK OF EXPLICITNESS' :

Many definitions or descriptions in traditional grammar are not explicit. In other words, they are not clearly, precisely and unambiguously stated. For example, let us take Jespersen's definition or description of subject (and also predicate) in his famous book **Essentials of English Grammar** :

"In such a simple sentence as **The dog barks** and naturally also in clauses like that **the dog barks** or **when the dog barks** — we call **the dog** subject and **barks** predicate".

The grammarian's description of the notion 'subject' is inexplicit and yet he assumes that the reader/learner understands what a 'Subject' is.

1.1.5 THE FALLACY OF MIXING UP DIFFERENT CRITERIA :

The traditionalists mixed up various criteria in their description of grammatical items and structures. Sometimes they used semantic criteria, sometimes formal and sometimes functional. Depending on the context, they would describe the same item in different ways and assign it different categorical status. For example, they would describe 'science' as a noun, let us say, in a structure like **He's studying science** and would call it an adjective in a structure like **He is studying in science college** because in the latter sentence **science** functions as a modifier of the noun **college**. Thus they mixed up different criteria leading to a descriptive framework which does not remain scientific. Modern linguists,

therefore, reject such a framework and they are in favour of a consistent and formal set of criteria for defining different word-classes.

1.1.6 THE WRITTEN FORM FALLACY :

The traditional linguists used the written form of the language as their data and therefore, their description of a language was the description of the written form of the language. The spoken form was completely ignored. From the modern linguist's point of view, this is a fallacy because speech is primary and the written form is only a codification of speech. This fallacy led to the neglect of phonology in traditional grammar. You will perhaps remember that we have already said that the traditional linguists dealt with two basic units in language – **word** and **sentence**.

1.1.7 THE PRESCRIPTIVE FALLACY :

The traditionalists prescribed, in many cases, the norms of language use for the native speaker. For example, many grammarians had suggested that split infinitives should be avoided. But many native speakers use this structure; they would prefer **'to kindly grant me'** to **'kindly to grant me'**. A grammarian's job is to observe data, i.e. a native speaker's speech and then describe it faithfully and scientifically instead of prescribing norms for the speaker. In other words, linguistics, according to the modern linguists, should be descriptive and not prescriptive.

1.1.8 THE FALLACY OF IGNORING LANGUAGE VARIATIONS:

The traditional grammarians considered language 'monolithic'. They ignored different varieties of the same language – dialectal and register varieties and paid attention to only one variety, the written language of great literary writers of the past. This is a huge fallacy because language is what people speak and all varieties of a language need to be scientifically studied.

1.2 SUMMARY :

We have touched on some of the major fallacies in traditional grammar. This we did in order to make you understand why this model of linguistic description was later discarded by the structural linguists of the 20th century.

The traditional grammarians thus gave us a model of linguistic description which was based on 'parsing'. They described the parts of speech, grammatical form and function of a word in a particular sentence and then divided sentences into parts (i.e. different constituents, phrases, clauses, etc.) and described their grammatical forms and functions by capturing their syntactic interrelations. Though they came under severe criticism from the structuralists (1920–1960) they

presented a model which, in spite of its intrinsic limitations and the fallacies in practice, did have insights that were used by the linguists after the structuralists.

The traditional grammarians used meaning and intuition in their descriptive framework as a tool but later linguists like Chomsky and the Chomskyans did utilize the native speaker's intuition as data, though not as a tool in their framework.

The structuralists' severe reaction against the traditionalists made the pendulum swing to the other extreme and it appears that the traditionalists' lack of "scientificness" made the structuralists 'scientific' with almost a vengeance and in the later units we will look into this 'scientific' model of syntactic analysis in some detail and see what sort of reaction they attracted from their successors in the field, namely the transformational generativists.

As the course proceeds we will keep on seeing all these paradigms of the 20th century and affirming the ancient truth about science : The history of any science is a history of successive modifications. And when the modifications can no longer explain the truth a scientific paradigm is discarded and replaced or superseded by another.

1.3 REVIEW QUESTION 1

- (a) What is meant by a 'fallacy'?
- (b) Answer in one or two sentence(s) what you understand about the following:
 - (i) Latinate fallacy
 - (ii) Written form fallacy
 - (iii) Logical fallacy.
- (c) What fallacies of traditional grammar would you associate with the following statements?
 - (i) Noun is the name of a place, person or thing.
 - (ii) 'I don't find none' — this sentence means 'I find someone' because two negatives make an affirmative.
 - (iii) **Shall** and **will** are markers to prove that English has a future tense.
 - (iv) A speaker of English should say "It's I" in place of **It's me**.
- (d) What role does meaning play in traditional grammar ?

UNIT 2 □ MORPHOLOGY AND MORPHOPHONEMICS

Structure

2.0 Objectives

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Topics in Morphology

2.2.1 The scope of morphology in relation to the other components of grammar

2.2.2 Morphemes, Morphs, Allomorphs

2.2.3 Free and bound Morphemes

2.2.4 Roots and Stems

2.2.5 Inflections and derivations

2.2.6 Class Changing and Class Maintaining derivations

2.2.7 Morphological representation

2.2.8 Compounding

2.3 Morphophonemics

2.3.1 Alternations

2.4 Summing up

2.5 Glossary

2.6 Review Questions

2.7 Bibliography

2.0 OBJECTIVES :

This unit will enable the learner to —

- a. understand the basic concepts related to the morphological analysis of words,
- b. understand the characteristics of morphemes and how morphemes combine to form words,
- c. analyse the composition of words by identifying prefixes and suffixes,
- d. distinguish between inflectional and derivational processes of word formation,
- e. know how inflectional affixes create new words within a paradigm and how types of meaning are often indicated with inflection,
- f. know how derivational affixes create new words belonging to different paradigms,
- g. distinguish between class-changing and class-maintaining derivational processes,
- h. understand aspects of morphophonemics, how morphology and phonology interact and how morphemes can be phonologically determined,

- i. know about allomorphs and their environment,*
- j. learn how to solve morphological problems,
- k. give judgements on whether an analysis is right to capture the morphemic interrelations, and
- l. identify if there is any ambiguity in the morphological make-up of a word.

In other words, the student will learn about the word formation processes.

Besides, the student should learn to identify allomorphs of a morpheme and write a rule to show their distribution, i.e. learn to solve morphophonemic problems.

2.1 INTRODUCTION :

As we are aware, the grammar of a language consists of different components such as phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. A language shows systematic organization at different levels and each component needs to look after a particular level. For example, the phonological component takes care of the phonological level, showing how the sounds of a language are organized. The syntactic component deals with different sentential patterns by capturing the interrelation between different constituents (parts) of sentences and also by showing the processes involved in the transformation of one type of sentence to another. The morphological component, which is our concern in this unit, is related to the structure of words. We would see here, how different parts of words are organized in a particular language.

The term 'morphology' reminds us of words like 'biology', 'psychology', 'physiology', 'chronology', 'philology' etc. We all know that the sound sequence - **logy** means "a branch of study". Thus 'psychology' means a branch of study dealing with human psyche, i.e. mind. Similarly the other words denote different branches of study. You might be wondering, why a branch of study dealing with the structure of words is called 'morphology' and not something like, say *wordology*! Well, to answer this, we need to know about something called 'morphemes'. Before that, just refer to your section on phonology. We have seen that in the phonological component, the minimal units of the sound system of a language are called 'phonemes'. Similarly the morphological component, which deals with the words of a language, is built up on its minimal units. These units are called 'morphemes'. To put it in a different way, 'morphemes' are the minimal units of which the words of a language are constructed. A morpheme can be described as the smallest linguistic unit which has a meaning or a grammatical function.

Before we proceed further, let us look at some examples. Consider the following three words : **unclear**, **unhappy**, and **uncertain**. Notice that these three words have something in common. They all share the sound sequence **un-**, which means something like "not". **Un-** is a morpheme; the remaining part of each of these words

is also a morpheme. All words consist of one or more morphemes. The word **book** consists of just one morpheme. The word **bookish**, however, contains two (**book** and **-ish**), and **unfaithful** contains three (**un-**, **faith** and **-ful**).

Now look at the following sound sequences under sets A and B, which are impossible words of English :

A. *clearun, *happyun, *certainun, *nesshappy, *lyclean, *ingread

B. *unhouse, *unbook, *unpotato, *penness, *bedly, *cowing

(It is a convention that the symbol *(star) is used before a wrong or ungrammatical word or structure you will see its use in your lesson on syntax also.)

What observations can we make from here? The examples in A show that morphemes don't just combine at random order. As language users, we know something about the morpheme order. We all know that the correct combinations of morphemes in set A would be :

unclear, unhappy, uncertain, happiness, cleanly and reading

The examples in B show that we also know something about the types of morphemes that are able to join together. While **un-** can be added to the adjectives **clear, happy** and **certain**, it cannot be added to the nouns **house, book** and **potato**.

Similarly, **-ness, -ly** and **-ing** cannot be added to nouns such as **pen, bed** and **cow**. This unit on morphology will take you to the finer details of the components of words as well as the word formation processes. Here you will learn about morphological processes and how these processes can modify a word's structure by adding or changing an element.

The pronunciation of a morpheme can sometimes vary depending on the context in which it appears. The indefinite article in English, for example, is **an** before words starting with vowels, but **a** elsewhere. **A** and **an** both mean exactly the same thing. They both represent the same morpheme. It is just that the precise realization of that morpheme varies according to the context. **A** and **an** are allomorphs of the same morpheme.

Some affixes can be added to almost any word of the appropriate word class, others are much more restricted. The affix **-er**, for example, can add to almost any verb to mean "one who does". Examples are **analyser, driver, publisher** etc. We can say that **-er** is a very productive affix. If we were to invent a new verb **pick**, it would be possible to use the word **picker** to mean "one who picks".

On the other end of the continuum is the affix **-th**. This can be added to a very restricted set of nouns, e.g. **truth, warmth, width**. But it is impossible to expand that set. We can't talk about the **straightth** or **purpleth** of an object. **-th** is not a productive affix. In the later subsections we shall discuss different types of affixes and their role in the making of new words. We shall also see how bigger words can be made of smaller words.

2.2 TOPICS IN MORPHOLOGY :

2.2.1. THE SCOPE OF MORPHOLOGY IN RELATION TO THE OTHER COMPONENTS OF GRAMMAR

Morphology is the system that governs the structure of words and the construction of word forms. Morphemes are units of meaning. The word **dog** contains one morpheme. Now, if you add "-s" to the word **dog**, it becomes **dogs**. The word **dogs** contains two morphemes. They indicate the following :

- (i) an animal that barks
- (ii) more than one in number.

In very general terms, morphology is concerned with the internal make-up of words. To illustrate the fact that English words have structure, consider the following sentences:

- a. The fearsome rats attacked the foolish cat.
- b. The fear-some rat-s attack-ed the fool-ish cat.

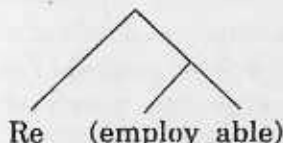
A number of points can be made about this segmentation of words. Firstly, words can clearly be grouped depending on which suffixes they can and cannot take. The following constructs are obviously ill-formed :

- c. *fear-ish
- *foolsome
- *cat-ed
- *man-s

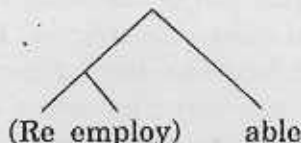
On the other hand there are lots of words like **cat** which take -s to form a plural and which may therefore be put together as a class which excludes **man**, **child**, and so on.

The above evidence shows that words are made up of identifiable sub-parts. However, their interrelation is arguable. For instance, the word **re-employ-able** seems to have three constituents. We can ask how exactly the segmentation should be represented. This is because there are alternative ways of doing it as the following structures suggest :

a.



b.



Thus we can think of the make-up of the word in two ways :

- (i) as having the part **re-** added to **employable**, or
- (ii) as the part **able** added to **re-employ**.

And it is likely that these morphological differences will have semantic implications. Many languages have much more complicated word structures than

English, and the question of internal word structure in such languages can be very intricate.

For our purposes, it is enough to note that words appear to be segmentable. The parts are called morphemes, and these can be grammatical (such as the English plural -s suffix) or lexical. One way to think of morphemes is as the smallest units of grammar, but it must be emphasized that they are theoretically seen as quite abstract concepts – in the English verb *saw*, for instance, we seem to have the 'lexeme' (the 'semantic unit') 'see' and the grammatical morpheme past in a 'fused' state.

Morphology is the study of how words are constructed, just as syntax is the study of how sentences are constructed. Morphology has a close connection to phonology, since words are made up of phonemes as well as of morphemes, and the phonological shape of a morpheme may depend on its phonological environment. To understand this point, let us consider the following words :

cat, dog, horse.

We know that :

The first word has three phonemes : /k/, /æ/, /t/.

The second word has three phonemes : /d/, /ɒ/, /g/.

The third word has three phonemes : /h/, /ɔ:/, /s/.

Now, if a plural marker is added to each of them, its form will be different in each case. Try saying aloud: cats, dogs, horses. Don't you notice that in the first word the plural marker sounds as /s/, in the second word, the plural marker sounds as /z/ and in the third one the plural marker sounds as /ɪz/? In our lesson we will call this plural marker a 'morpheme', which is a meaningful unit of word formation. The question is, why does the same unit have different phonological shapes? And the answer is that here the phonological shape of the plural marker depends on its phonological environment. See the final segment of each of the words : /t/, /g/ and /s/ respectively, i.e. a voiceless stop, a voiced stop, a sibilant. It is the phonological feature of the final segment of the existing word that determines the phonological shape of the plural marker (a morpheme). This is how we understand the relation of morphology with phonology. We will discuss this in detail in the section on morphophonemics.

Morphology has a connection to syntax also, since the internal structure of a word may depend in part on its syntactic environment; and it has a connection to semantics, since the meaning of a complex word is a function (sometimes a very interesting function) of the meanings of its parts. We shall talk about it in the subsection on compounding.

2.2.2 MORPHEMES, MORPHS, ALLOMORPHS :

In the subsection 2.1 above we have seen that morphemes are the minimal meaningful units of which the words of a language are composed. One word may

have one morpheme or more than one morpheme. Each morpheme has its characteristic features regarding the following :

- what its phonological shape is (or shapes are), in case of more than one manifestations

- what its environment is (what should it get attached to)

- what its meaning is

- what its class (part of speech) is.

According to these features morphemes operate in the system of a language. Each morpheme has these features fixed when it is included in the lexicon of a language. A speaker's knowledge of a morpheme would be determined when s/he has the implicit knowledge of all these features.

Now we need to understand morphemes in relation to two notions : **morphs** and **allomorphs**. A morpheme can be represented by more than one forms. By 'forms' we mean phonological or orthographic representations. In simpler terms, by the shape the sounds take in pronunciation or the shape the letters take in spelling. Let us try to understand this idea of shape or representation. Look at the following words and their pronunciation :

Spelling	Pronunciation
Cats	kæt. s
Dogs	dɒ g z
Horses	hɔ s. iz

We all know that the letter 's' in the left hand side column stands for plural. But notice how the same plural is represented in the pronunciation. They are /s/, /z/ and /iz/. Remember, all three of them mean the same: 'plural'. Now which one of them should be called a morpheme?

The answer is, they all are representations of the morpheme for 'plural'. And these representations are called 'morphs'. So, the plural morpheme in English has three morphs: /s/, /z/ and /iz/. And they are allomorphs of one another.

Consider another example. Look at the following rows :

Singular		Plural	
Spelling	Pronunciation	Spelling	Pronunciation
Index	/indeks/	indices	indis. iz
House	/haus/	houses	hauz. əz
Knife	/naɪf/	knives	naɪv. z

In general, a noun in its plural form is obtained by adding the plural morph with the singular form, isn't it? From these four rows above you are clear that the plural morphs are /-iz/, /-əz/ and /-z/. And they are allomorphs of one another. But there is something else to notice. See the following two rows:

A	B
/indeks/	/indis/
/haus/	/hauz/
/naif/	/naiv/

Now what does /indis/ mean in the word, /indisiz/, if you leave out the plural morph /-iz/? It means the same as /indeks/, isn't it? So, /indeks/ and /indis/ are the representations of the same morpheme. They are morphs and their relations are allomorphic. The same relationship exists between /haus/ and /hauz/ or /naif/ and /naiv/.

2.2.3 FREE AND BOUND MORPHEMES :

We have understood from our discussion so far that words are made up of morphemes. There may be one morpheme or more than one morpheme constituting a word. When one morpheme makes a word, the word and the morpheme are identical in-shape. Thus some morphemes are used as words, and they can freely occur by themselves, with no other morpheme attached. These morphemes are called 'free morphemes'. Words such as **red**, **dog**, **rice**, and **good** are examples of free morphemes. The other type of morphemes can never occur alone, they always have to be attached to another morpheme. These morphemes are called 'bound morphemes'. They are also called 'affixes'. Un-, pre-, -ish, and -ness are examples of bound morphemes. Among them, **un-** and **pre-** are 'prefixes' because they attach to the **beginning** of free morphemes. The other two, **-ish** and **-ness** are 'suffixes', they attach to the **end** of free morphemes.

We can define them in the following way :

Free morpheme : A morpheme which can be used on its own as (what we traditionally know as) a 'word', is called a free morpheme. For example, chair, slow, cat.

Bound morpheme : A morpheme which cannot be used on its own is called a bound morpheme. It is used only as an affix in conjunction with a free morpheme. For example, -s in chairs, -ly in slowly, -ing in eating.

2.2.4 ROOTS AND STEMS :

We have seen the two types of bound morphemes of affixes. Now let us concentrate on the different states of free morphemes. They are roots and stems.

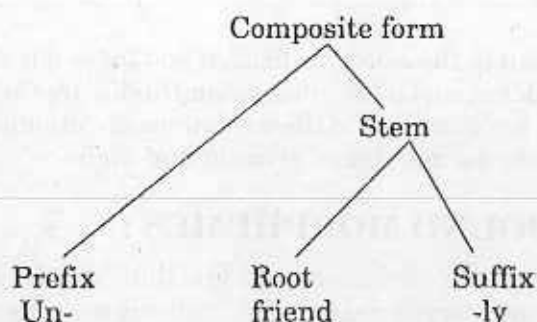
Root : A morpheme within a word that carries the main lexical information is called a root. For example, **go** is the root in the word **going**, **possible** is the root in the word **impossible**, **method** is the root in the word **methods**. To define it structurally, in the composition of a word, the root is the ultimate free morpheme which cannot be split further into any meaningful units. The root is the central morpheme, which remains intact after all the suffixes and prefixes are removed.

In concatenative morphology, the root is the unit that provides the core meaning and to which affixes may be attached.

Stem: In concatenative morphology, the stem is the unit, root + affix, to which affixes are attached.

"A stem is any morpheme or combination of morphemes to which an affix can be added." (Gleason 1955:59)

Let us analyse the word unfriendly in terms of root and stem.



(Plural markers such as -s, -es or tense markers such as -s, -es etc. are inflectional affixes). A root can also be stem but a stem is not always a root. The point will be clear as we deal with more examples.

Before we proceed further, let us see the make up of the word **readers**:

Readers= reader + s
 Reader= read + er
 Read: cannot be divided further

Here, the root is obviously **read** since it cannot be divided further in terms of any meaningful units.

Thus the word **reader** is a stem consisting of the root **read** and the derivational suffix (elaborated below) **-er**. An inflectional suffix, the plural marker **-s** can be added to it. So, to identify the stem from the word **readers** we need to remove the inflectional suffix **-s** (plural marker) and we will get **reader**, which is a stem. In a different context, if we have to identify the stem in the word **reads**, we must note that it is a verb and the inflectional suffix that needs to be removed is the present tense marker **-s**. Therefore, the stem is **read**. It is also a root.

Following is a comparison of root and stem :

Root	Stem
1. All roots can be stems. For example, portray is a root. It is also a stem.	1. All stems are not roots. For example, portrayal is a stem, but it is not a root.
2. A root is indivisible in terms of any further morphemes. For example, arrive cannot be divided further, it is a root.	2. A stem is not necessarily indivisible in terms of any further morphemes. For example, the stem arrival can be divided further into two morphemes : arrive and -al .

Before we proceed to the following subsection, look at the Exercise no. 3 and see if you can do it.

2.2.5 INFLECTIONS AND DERIVATIONS :

We can distinguish between two types of affixes : **inflectional affixes** and **derivational affixes**. Derivational affixes create new lexemes (dictionary words). When you add **-ness** to **happy**, you happen to create a new word. **Happiness** means something different from **happy**, and would be listed separately in a dictionary. When you add **-er** to **write**, you create a new word. **Writer** refers to a person, whereas **write** denotes an action. Derivational affixes can also change the part of speech of the word they add to. The suffix **-er**, for example, creates a noun out of a verb. They do not always change the part of speech of the word, though. **Un-** is a derivational affix. **Unknown** means something very different from **known**. Yet both are adjectives. Here there is no change of class or part of speech.

Inflectional affixes do not create new lexemes. They just add grammatical information (such as tense to the verbs, person or number to the nouns, or degree to the adjectives) to existing lexemes. To see it for yourself study a particular entry in a standard dictionary. To understand this point, look at the following table :

Root & Stem	Class/ Part of speech	Affix	Type of affix	Word after affixation	Class	Type of change	Nature of affixation
gate	Noun	-s	suffix	gates	Noun number	Change in	Inflection
great	Adjective	-er	suffix	greater	Adjective degree	Change in	inflection
graze	Verb	-d	suffix	grazed	verb	Change in tense	Inflection

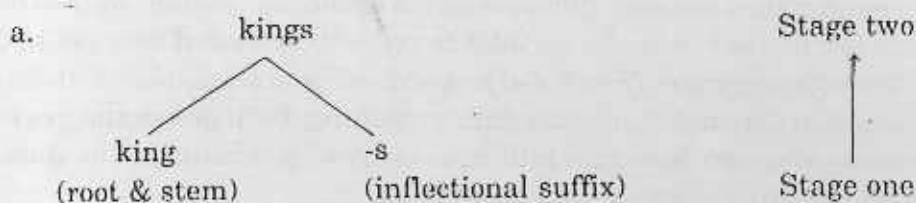
This table shows three different cases of affixation, all of which are inflections. In the first case, the plural marker **-s** (an affix) is added to a noun **gate**. The word after affixation is **gates**. The only change that takes place here is that **gates** is the plural form of **gate**. Both the words are nouns. The meanings are not essentially different. Plural affixes are inflectional affixes. **Gates** is just a form of the lexeme **gate**. **Gates** would not be listed separately in the dictionary; it is just a form of the dictionary word **gate**. In the second case, a comparative degree marker **-er** comes in the form of an affix and is added to **great**. The words **great** and **greater** are not different in meaning; they are only different forms of the same word. In the third case, the past tense marker **-d** is also an inflectional affix. **Grazed** does not mean something different from **graze**. The affix **-d** just adds some grammatical contextual information (tense), it does not change the entire meaning. Both **graze** and **grazed** are verbs. You may also note here that inflection involves no change in the class of the words. In all the three examples, the class is intact.

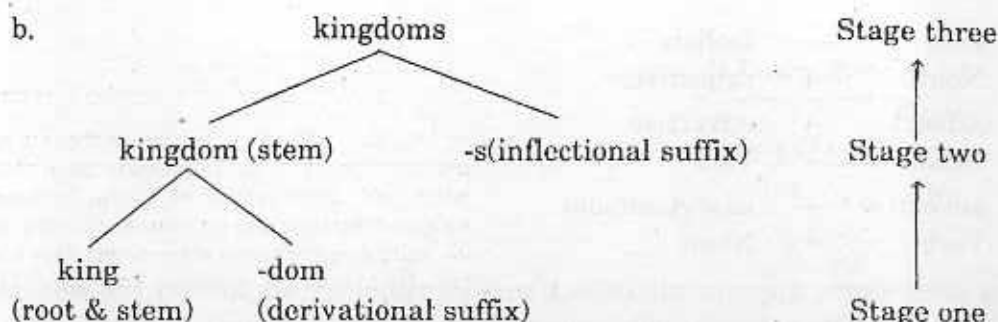
Derivation, in contrast to inflection, produces a word which belongs to a different 'paradigm'. A 'paradigm' can be understood as a new set of meaning. The easiest

way to understand the change of paradigm is to see if a new lexeme (a new dictionary entry) is created. For example, a derivational suffix such as **-dom**, when added to **king**, produces a new work **kingdom**. We must note that the word **king** and its derivative **kingdom** belong to different sets of meaning. They are two different entries in the dictionary. **King** refers to a person whereas **kingdom** refers to a territory. We can draw a similar table to understand how derivation works :

Root & stem	Class/ Part of speech	Affix	Type of affix	Word after affixation	Class	Type of change	Nature of affixation
act	Verb	-or	Suffix	actor	Noun	From action to agent	Derivation
perform	Verb	-ance	Suffix	performance	Noun	From action to event	Derivation
kind	Adjective	-ness	Suffix	kindness	Noun	From quality to attribute	Derivation
Victim	Noun	-ize	Suffix	victimize	Verb	From person to action	Derivation
history	Noun	-ian	Suffix	historian	Noun	From subject to person	Derivation
depend	Verb	-able	Suffix	dependable	Adjective	From action to quality	Derivation

Now to understand the operation of both inflection and derivation together, let us take examples like **kings** and **kingdoms**. Both **king** and **kingdom**, as nouns, may take the plural marker (inflectional suffix) **-s** to form **kings** and **kingdoms** respectively. Let us see the formation of these two words.





Do you notice the difference between the word-formation processes of the two above? To elaborate, in the first case, there are only two stages. At stage one, king (working as both root and stem at the same time) is added to the inflectional suffix -s and in stage two, they are seen as a complete word. We call it a complete word since no new affixes can be added to it. The addition of an affix will produce only an ungrammatical word, e.g. *kingdoms.

In the second case, there are three stages. At stage one, king (working as both root and stem at the same time) is added to the derivational suffix -dom. The product, **kingdom**, is sent to stage two, where it takes an inflectional suffix -s. Finally at stage three, the word formation process is complete where the word **kingdoms** appears as a complete word.

In theoretical analysis of the morphology of languages, the distinction between inflectional and derivational morphology is very important. Taking the words **employing** and **employed** as examples, we can assume that there is a lexical stem which they have in common – **employ**. Inflectional morphology, as we have seen in our first table, is concerned with the manner in which these lexical stems are combined with grammatical markers for things like plurality, degree and tense. The appropriate selection of grammatical markers depends on the class of the stem, for example the degree marker can be added to only the adjectives and tense to the verbs – it is not possible in English to add tense to nouns, for instance (***lamped** from **lamp**, and so on). You must note that the concept of a lexical stem is an abstract one. Otherwise it would not be possible to explain the involvement of plurals in English words such as *men* and *children*. The inflectional system of English is rather poor. There are languages which inflect for many more markers than English – gender, case, and noun and verb classes are typical examples. In linguistics, the study of inflectional morphology alone is a vast field.

Whereas inflectional morphology studies the combination of stems with grammatical markers, the job of derivational morphology is to investigate the construction of the stems themselves. Typical cases of derivational morphology involve the English 'class-changing' suffixes which form adjectives from nouns, verbs from nouns, nouns from verbs, and so on, as the following examples illustrate:

- a. Fool → foolish
Noun → Adjective
- b. Advert → advertise
Noun → Verb
- c. advertise → advertisement
Verb → Noun

At a later stage, appropriate inflectional morphology applies on the resulting lexical stems and therefore we get forms such as **advertised** and **advertisements**.

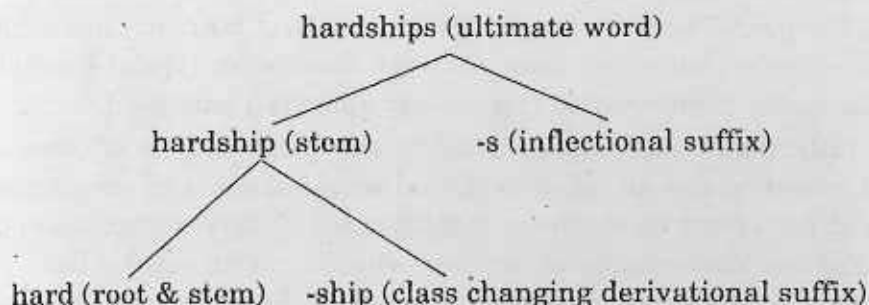
In practice there are still a lot of dispute over the distinction between inflectional and derivational morphology as it is not always very clear-cut in some languages. The classification of a particular morphological process may not be a straightforward matter always. However, for our purposes the classification explained above will be sufficient.

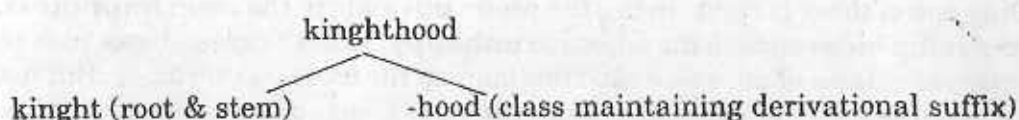
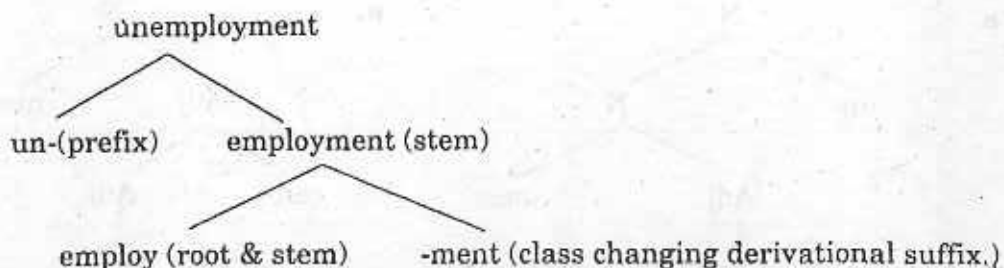
To make sure that you have understood the points discussed above, try to solve the Exercise no. 4 below.

2.2.6 CLASS CHANGING AND CLASS MAINTAINING DERIVATIONS:

Derivational affixes are of two types, class changing and class maintaining derivational affixes. The distinction between them is very easy to understand. If, after affixation with a derivational affix, the new word has the same class (i.e. part of speech) as the original word, the affix is called class maintaining derivational affix. For example, when the suffix **-hood** is added to the stem **boy** and forms the word **boyhood**, the part of speech or class does not change. Both **boy** and **boyhood** are nouns. The suffix **-hood** is a class maintaining derivational suffix.

On the other hand, take a suffix like **-ment**. Its addition to a word like **develop** results into a word **development**. Notice that whereas **develop** was a verb, the word **development** is a noun. Here, **-ment** is a class-changing derivational suffix. To understand the difference thoroughly, look at the morphological analysis of the following words :





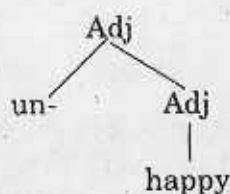
2.2.7 MORPHOLOGICAL REPRESENTATION

Modern morphologists think that one can write rules to describe possible words. For example, the prefix **un-** is added to adjectives to create new adjectives, as in the formation of the word **unintelligible**. We can write this fact as a rule :

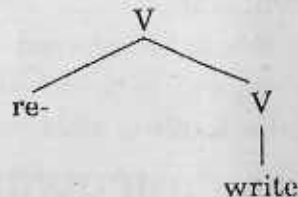
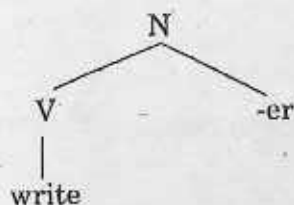
adj → un + adj

This rule says that an adjective can consist of **un-** plus an adjective (in that order).

Just like the module of syntax involves syntactic phrase structure rules to draw syntactic trees, morphological rules can be used to create trees showing word structure. Following is a tree for the word **unhappy** :

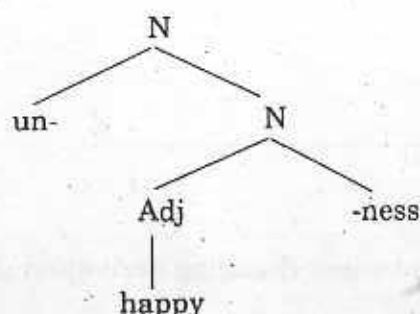


Similar trees can be drawn for the words **writer**, **cat** and **rewrite** :

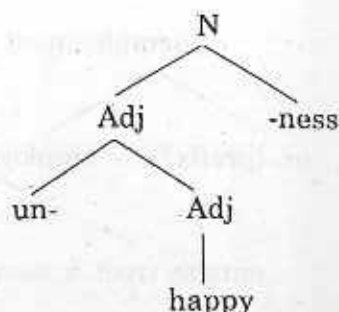


Things are a little more complex when there are more than two morphemes in a word. The word **unhappiness** has three morphemes, so in theory there are two ways to draw the tree, as shown in (a) and (b).

a.



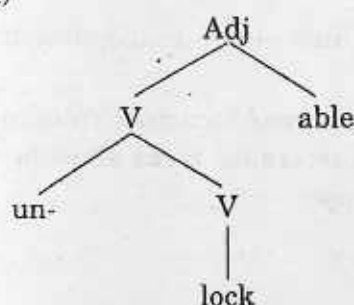
b.



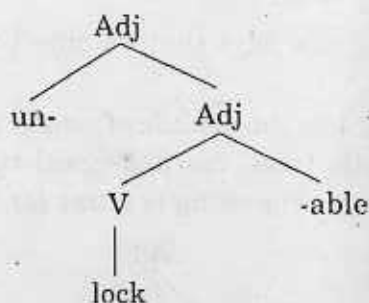
Only one of these is right. In (a), the prefix **un-** adds to the noun **happiness**. In (b), the suffix **-ness** adds to the adjective **unhappy**. In both cases, **-ness** adds to an adjective to make a noun, so we can't distinguish the trees on this basis. But notice that in (a) **un-** adds to a noun, and in (b), **un-** adds to an adjective. We have already seen that **un-** can add to adjectives (**unhappy, unlucky, unsatisfied**). But can it add to a noun? ***unluck, *undog** and ***unkitchen** are all impossible words. We cannot give any example of **un-** adding to a noun. Therefore (a) cannot be right and (b) is the correct tree.

There are also two ways that we could draw a tree for **unlockable** :

(a)



(b)



In (a), **un-** adds to a verb, and in (b) **un-** adds to an adjective. We have already seen that **un-** can add to an adjective, can it add to a verb? Yes, it can : **untie, undress, unpin, undo**. This is a different **un-**. It means something like "reverse the process of". So which one of (a) and (b) is correct? They both are. (a) and (b) mean different things.

(a) able to be unlocked.

(b) not able to be locked.

Unlockable is ambiguous, because it corresponds to two possible structures.

2.2.8 COMPOUNDING :

Compounding is a very interesting and productive process of word formation. In this process, two morphemes get together to form a new morpheme. The two morphemes which participate in compounding are always two stems. Affixes,

either prefixes or suffixes do not take part in compounding. They are added, if necessary, to the compound word. Examples will make it clear. See the following words :

houseboat blackboard mailbox aircraft textbook fingerprint

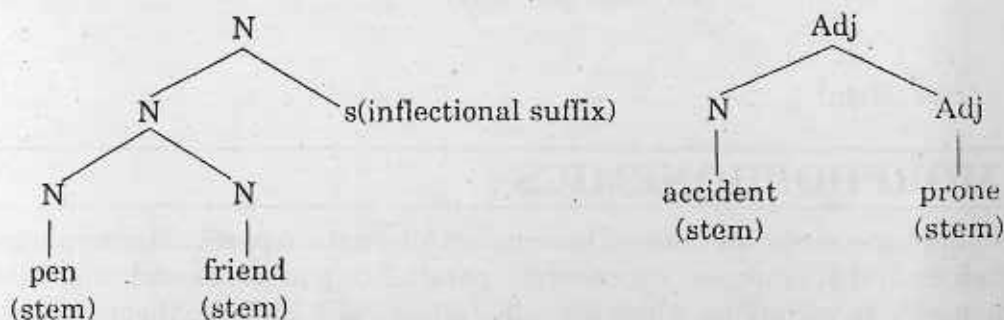
Notice that in each of them there are two free morphemes. Each of them works as stem. Notice one more point that the right-hand stem works as a kind of head. The word **houseboat** means a kind of 'boat' and not a kind of 'house'.

Considering that two morphemes get together to form a compound, let us discuss a few more properties of the compounds. Let us go step by step.

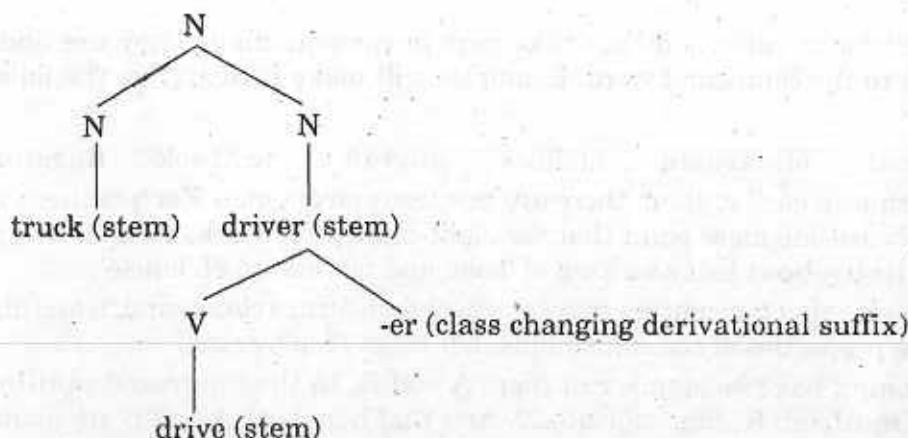
A compound has two stems; call them A and B. In the compound **mailbox**, A stands for **mail** and B stands for **box**. Notice that here both A and B are nouns. So we can say that it is a Noun-Noun compound. In other words, each stem has a class or part of speech. It is the class of the right hand stem, i.e. B, that the compound word gets as its class. Other than Noun-Noun compounds, there are other types of compounds also, such as Adjective-Noun compounds, Noun-Adjective compounds, Adjective-Adjective, Adjective-Verb, Preposition-Noun compounds etc. Look at the following compounds and their class :

Adjective-Noun	:	wildlife	
Noun-Adjective	:	class-conscious	accident-prone
Adjective-Adjective	:	long-lasting	short-lived
Adjective-Verb	:	cross-examine	dry-clean ill-treat deep-fry
Preposition-Noun	:	outdoor	underground downhill upstream overhead

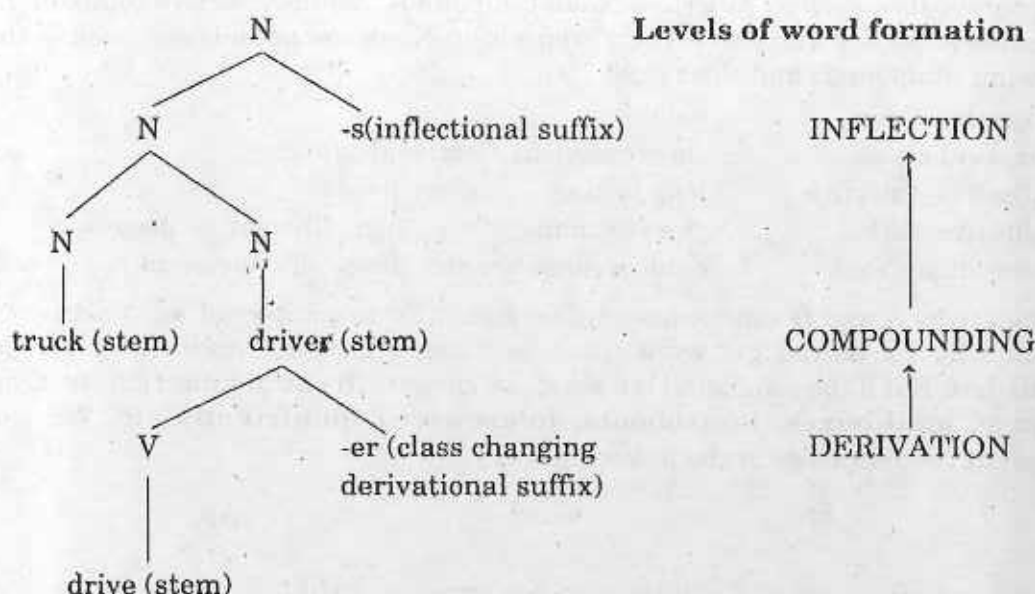
The stems A and B cannot have inflections prior to compounding. That is the reason why we do not get words such as *longer-lasting, *accidents-prone or *mails-box. But if the compound is a noun, we can attach plural inflections to it, for example, **mail-boxes**, **houseboats**, **housewives**, **penfriends** etc. We can represent them in trees in the following way :



The stems that participate in compounding can be a combination of two morphemes, one free and one bound. But it is seen that usually it is the second stem, i.e. B, which is of this type. For example, **truck-driver**, **absent-minded**, **old-fashioned**, **well-dressed**, **mouth-watering**, **good-looking** etc. Look at the morphological analysis of one of them:



Now if you are asked to analyse **truckdrivers**, how will you do it? Just add one more layer above the topmost node :



2.3 MORPHOPHONEMICS :

Morphophonemics is the study of how sounds alternate in particular morphemes. Morphemes and allomorphs are concepts parallel to phonemes and allophones. Morphemes have variations, which are called allomorphs. The rule that determines the phonetic form is a morphophonemic rule which is usually determined by both the morphology and the phonology. For example, the three alternate phonetic forms that correspond to the English morpheme -s for plural.

We can approach the subject of morphophonemics from the notion of allomorphs.

An allomorph is an alternative manifestation of a **morpheme** while it is understood as a set of meaningful linguistic units. Allomorphs vary in shape or pronunciation according to their conditions of use, but not as to meaning.

Here are some example of allomorphs. In English, the negative prefix **in-** has several allomorphs:

- in-capable
- il-logical
- im-probable
- ir-reverent

Morphophonemics is the study of phonemic differences between allomorphs of the same morpheme. It is a description of variations in a particular language. It looks after the phonological conditioning of allomorphs. In other words, it is the study of the phonemic structure of the allomorphs. It monitors the changes that morphemes undergo in certain environments.

2.3.1 ALTERNATIONS :

When different phonemic shapes represent a morpheme, they are called its alternations. Now, what do we understand by 'different phonemic shapes'? Sometimes, one morpheme is represented by a single phonemic shape. Take for example the following words :

pay pays paying payer payee payment

Here the case is very simple. In all the words, the root and stem pay has the phonemic shape /pei/. The addition of suffixes does not change its phonemic shape. It is phonemically unaffected by suffixation. But all morphemes of English are not so unaffected by the contexts. There are complicated cases. Some morphemes take different shapes in different environments. The changing phonemic shapes are called 'alternations'. There are two kinds of alternations, regular and irregular.

A regular alternation occurs most frequently under stated conditions. For example, English plural and tense markers /s/, /z/ and /iz/ are phonologically conditioned regular alternations. Their occurrence can mostly be predicted by rules. We know the phonemic shape of the plural in the words cats, dogs or horses or the phonemic shape of the present tense markers in sleeps, goes and browses. The regularity involved here can be described by saying that /s/ follows voiceless sounds except voiceless sibilants, /z/ follows voiced sounds except voiced sibilants and /iz/ follows voiced and voiceless sibilants.

These can be represented by-

Eng plu morph → s / vl sounds__#

Eng plu morph → z/ vd sounds__#

Eng plu morph → iz/ s sounds__#

However, beds and clubs are exceptions.

Irregular alternation occurs in the cases which cannot be described in terms of a rule. To understand this, look at the following data of plural formation :

ox	→	oxen
man	→	men
child	→	children

The phonemic shape of the plurals in the above words cannot be predicted by any rules. Moreover these are isolated cases. We do not have *foxen, *ben, *fieldren as plurals of **fox**, **ban** and **field**. This substantiates the point that plurals of **ox**, **man** and **child** are irregular alternations.

There are cases of alternation which can be called 'semi-regular'. The most appropriate example of this is the group of seven verbs – buy, think, seek, teach, bring, catch and fight. These verbs, while turning into past tense, follows a relatively less irregular pattern. Look at their past forms : **bought**, **thought**, **sought**, **taught**, **brought**, **caught** and **fought**. How do the phonemic shapes manifest themselves? The answer is, the stems lose everything except the initial consonant or the consonant cluster, then the vowel is added; and finally the past tense morpheme takes shape with the inclusion of a /t/. The most irregular alternation is shown in that of the past form of the verb go. The words go and went have absolutely nothing in common. This isolated example of irregular alternation is called 'suppletion' or 'suppletive alternation'.

Alternations can be either phonemically or morphemically conditioned. The most appropriate examples of phonemically conditioned alternation are the two shapes of English indefinite articles **a** and **an**. Look at their environment in the following noun phrases :

a man
a rich man
an honest man
an MA in English

The only factor to be considered for the selection of **a** or **an** is not grammatical, but phonological. We need to see what is the first phoneme of the next word; whether it is a consonant or a vowel. If it is a consonant, **a** is the shape of the article that comes; if it is a vowel, **an** is the shape of the article that appears. Therefore the alternation of the articles **a** and **an** is said to be phonemically conditioned.

An example of morphemically conditioned alternation is the choice between phonemic shapes of /waɪf/ (as in singular **wife**) and /waɪv/ (as in plural **wives**) of the morpheme **wife**. Consider the following examples where -s occurs after **wife** :

Expression	nature of -s
My wife's hat	(possessive marker)
My wife's coming with me	(contraction of is)
My wife's never been there	(contraction of has)

In these cases what is required is the phonemic shape /waɪf/ and not the shape /wɪv/, though there is an -s following it. So we conclude that it is not the sound of -s that determines the alternation of /waɪf/ but the morphological (and grammatical) status of it. The alternation /waɪv/ is required only when it is followed by a plural -s, otherwise not.

2.4 SUMMING UP :

Morphology is the study of word formation and structure. It studies how words composed of their smaller parts and the rules governing the process. The elements that are combining to form words are called morphemes. A morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit that a language has. It has a semantic and a grammatical function. Morphology as a module of grammatical system of a language depends on Phonology and Syntax. The knowledge of morphology creates an awareness of meaning at a sub-lexical level. It allows the teacher to deconstruct a word and consider its component parts for teaching.

2.5 GLOSSARY :

Affix : a bound morpheme that occurs attached to another morpheme (called the root or stem). Prefixes (attached to the beginning of the root or stem; ex. : **de**brief, **un**wind, **anti**semitic) and Suffixes (attached to the end; ex.: algebraic, weakness, boyhood) are the most common types of Affixes. Less common in the world's languages are Infixes inserted within the root or stem).

Bound morpheme : a morpheme that functions as **part of a word** but cannot stand alone as a word. Ex.: **-ment** (as in establishment), **-er** (painter), and plural morphemes. [-s (as in zebras) etc.].

Derivational morpheme : a morpheme that serves to **derive** a word of one class or meaning from a word of **another** class or meaning. Ex. : **-ment** (as in establishment), which **derives** a noun from a verb, and **re-** (**repaint**), which alters the meaning (paint again).

Free morpheme : a morpheme that can stand alone as a word (opposed to **bound morpheme**). Ex. : zebra, paint.

Inflectional morpheme : a morpheme used to create variant forms of a word to mark the **syntactic function** of the word in its sentence. Ex. : the suffix -s (as in eats) indicates that the verb agrees with a third person singular subject; the suffix -ed indicates the past tense for regular verbs.

NOTE : In English ALL inflectional (syntactic) morphemes are suffixes.

Lexicon : the list of all **words** and **morphemes** of a language that is stored in a native speaker's memory, the internalized dictionary.

Monomorphemic word : a word that has a single morpheme and that is therefore indivisible Ex. : I, God; love; aardvark; crocodile.

Morpheme : the smallest meaningful unit; the most elemental unit of meaning; from the Greek morphē – form. A morpheme may be represented by a single sound, by one syllable, or by several syllables. Morphemes combine according to the morphological rules of the language.

Morphology : The study of word formation, of **etymology** (origin of words), and of the internal structure (the organizational principles) of words.

Root : It is the main morpheme; it has **lexical** content and affixes are attached to it. Ex. : glamour is the root in “glamorous” or “unglamorous.”

Suppletive form : It is an alternate form, not predictable by regular or general rules; in other words, an exception. Ex. : man/men; phenomenon/phenomena; go/went; hold/held.

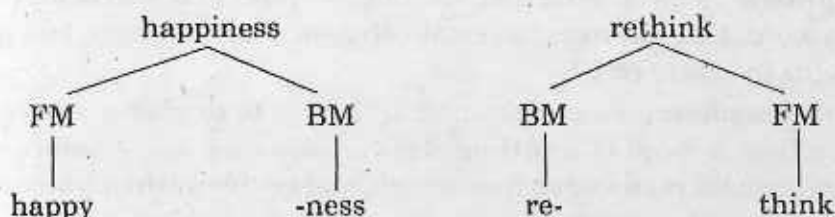
Tense : It is a category of the verb that expresses time reference, for example as past (walked) or present (walk).

Zero form : a morpheme that has no phonological representation. Ex. : the past tense of the verb hit is hit, the plural of sheep is sheep.

2.6 REVIEW QUESTIONS :

1. Following is a list of words. Identify the free and bound morphemes in them: rethink, discomfort, happily, unimportant, honestly, kindness, cruelty, computerize, readership, reorganize, impossible, indecent, grammarian.

Do it this way :



FM = free morpheme, BM = bound morpheme

2. Collect several examples of four kinds :

- From a written source (dictionary, newspaper)
- Words you've heard spoken
- Words that you make up ('new words').

Notice their morphological make-up and try to analyse them.

3. Identify prefixes, suffixes, roots and stems in the following words:

unimportant, tribal, confusion, insufficient, boredom, scholarship, preference, mispronunciation, antiestablishment, unaccountable, underdeveloped, unidirectional, unconstitutional, anticlockwise, discover, discomfort, nationalize.

4. FILL IN THE EMPTY BOXES TO COMPLETE THE CHART

Root & stem	Class/ Affix part of speech	Type of affix	Word after affixation	Class	Type of change	Nature of affixation
person	Noun -al		personal	Adjective		
	Verb	suffix	treatment			
grace	Noun		disgrace	Noun		
Walk	Verb		walked			

5. Write morphological representations with labelling the classes (N, V, etc.) of the following words:

short-tempered, window-shopping, fingerprints, horse-traders, weekends.

6. Write a short note on morphophonemics of English.

7. Do you think that knowledge of morphophonemics can help you teach spelling in English? Substantiate your answer with examples.

8. How is the knowledge of morphology going to help you teach grammar to young learners?

2.7 BIBLIOGRAPHY: (*Marked books are for further reference of students)

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UNIT 3 □ STRUCTURAL SYNTAX

Structure

- 3.0 Introduction**
- 3.1 Immediate Constituent Analysis**
- 3.2 The structure of predication**
 - 3.2.1 The structure of complementation**
 - 3.2.2 The structure of modification**
 - 3.2.3 The structure of subordination**
 - 3.2.4 The structure of Co-ordination**
 - 3.2.5 Non-contiguous IC structure**
- 3.3 Summary**
- 3.4 Review Question**
- 3.5 Transformational Generative syntax**
 - 3.5.1 Introduction**
 - 3.5.2 Limitations of the structuralist model**
 - 3.5.3 Cases of structural ambiguity**
 - 3.5.4 Cases of constructional homonymy**
 - 3.5.5 Cases of deletion**
 - 3.5.6 Cases of paraphrase relation**
 - 3.5.7 Summary**
 - 3.5.8 Review Question**
- 3.6 The Noun Phrase (NP) structure**
 - 3.6.1 Basic Sentence (or Clause) Patterns**
 - 3.6.1.1 The NP with premodifier(s)**
 - 3.6.1.2 NP → Ordinal - N**
 - 3.6.1.3 NP → Quantifier - N**
 - 3.6.1.4 NP → Adj. Phrase - N**
 - 3.6.1.5 NP → Classifier - N**
- 3.7 Review Question**
- 3.8 The Noun Phrase with Prepositional Phrase**
 - 3.8.1 NP modified by another NP as a post modifier**
 - 3.8.2 Two or more Noun Phrases conjoined**

3.8.3 NP Containing a Relative Clause

3.8.4 NP as a Complement Clause

3.8.5 Review Question

3.8.6 The Verb Phrase

3.8.7 Review Question

3.9 The structure of the Sentence

3.9.1 Review Question

3.10 Summary

3.11 Recommended Reading

3.0. INTRODUCTION :

We have already seen that the structural linguists (1920–1960) rejected the traditional grammarian's model of linguistic analysis because of what they called 'fallacies'. In our units on Phonology and Morphology you have already seen how methodical the structuralists were and how structure-based their descriptions were (Please remember that our courses on phonology and morphology are basically structural phonology and structural morphology). At the level of Syntax also they were highly meticulous about making linguistics a science and capturing the syntactic interrelations between the constituents rigorously and scientifically without any dependence on meaning or 'logic'.

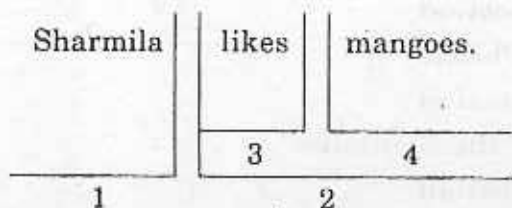
3.1. IMMEDIATE CONSTITUENT ANALYSIS :

The framework of syntactic analysis used by the structuralists is known as Immediate Constituent (IC) analysis. In this system their objective was to capture the interrelations between the immediate constituents in a structure, meaning, where elements are immediately related to each other in the structure. In other words, they made a distinction between constituents and immediate constituents. Let us consider the following sentence.

Sharmila likes mangoes.

There are three constituents in this sentence. But the syntactic interrelations between the three are different from each other. A constituent analysis (not immediate constituent analysis) of this sentence might only capture the linear constituency relations between the three constituents. But how these three are hierarchically related will also have to be captured for which the structuralists postulated the framework of immediate constituent analysis. An illustration of the above sentence will help you understand the point. The sentence – Sharmila likes mangoes – has at the highest level of hierarchy immediate constituency relation between 'Sharmila' and 'likes mangoes'. And then 'likes' and 'mangoes' are immediate constituents of each other at the next lower level of hierarchy. We

can represent this immediate constituency relation by using the following box diagram:



Here 1 and 2 are immediate constituents and 3 and 4 are immediate constituents. The important point is that 1 and 4 are not immediate constituents though they are constituents in the same structure. The basic presupposition is that all the constituents in an utterance do not carry equal syntactic load or enjoy equal syntactic status. Their syntactic status is determined by their position in the syntactic hierarchy.

You will have noticed from this diagram that the linguists have used bracketing convention to capture the IC interrelations. And this bracketing convention they have borrowed from mathematics. This bracketing helps to disambiguate structures and their interrelations which are otherwise ambiguous.

Let us consider the following problem :

$$3 \times 2 + 7 = ?$$

The answer to this problem could be either 13 or 27 because this structure is ambiguous. The ambiguity lies in the order of application of the two processes – multiplication and addition. If we apply multiplication first and addition next we get 13 but if we apply addition first and multiplication next we get 27. In order to disambiguate the structure the mathematicians use the bracketing convention. For example,

(i) $(3 \times 2) + 7 = 13$

but, (ii) $3 \times (2 + 7) = 27$

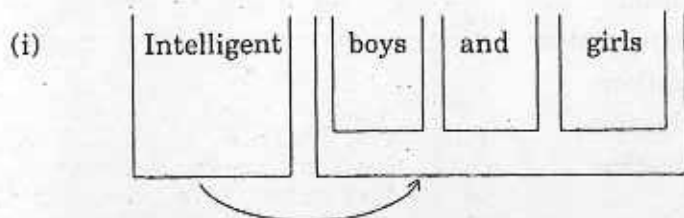
See that the ambiguity is resolved and for (i) you can have only one answer 13 (and not 27) and for (ii) you can have only one answer 27 (and not 13).

This bracketing principle has been used by the structural linguists for resolving ambiguity in linguistic structures. Let's take the following linguistic structure:

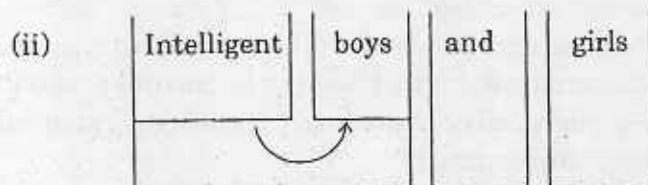
Intelligent boys and girls

This is an ambiguous structure because 'intelligent' may refer to 'boys and girls' (both boys and girls are intelligent) or on the contrary, it might refer to only 'boys' and not girls (boys who are intelligent and girls). The ambiguity lies in the scope of modification of the adjective 'intelligent'. By using the bracketing

convention (box diagram is basically a bracketing convention) we can disambiguate this linguistic structure in the following way:

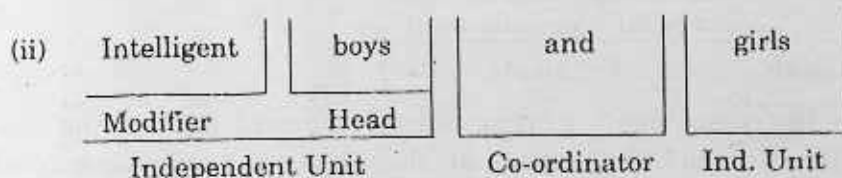
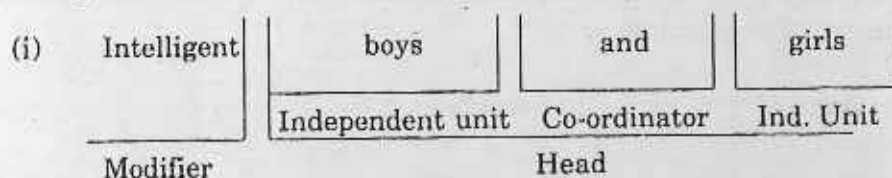


Here 'intelligent' modifies both boys and girls.



Here 'intelligent' modifies only 'boys' and 'girls' are outside the scope of modification.

This model of syntactic analysis is known as Immediate Constituent analysis (or IC analysis). And the structuralists not only capture the relations between the constituents in a structure by bracketing them but also by labelling them. Without the labels the bracketing system would be inadequate and inexplicit. The labels used by them can be categorical labels, like noun, verb, adjective, etc. or functional, like subject, predicate, verbal complement, head, modifier, etc. As functional labels in linguistic structures capture functional interrelations between the immediate constituents, they are more insightful and explanatory compared to categorical labelling. And, therefore, in this course we have used this functional labelling. Let us now add functional labels to the diagrams given above.



In our IC analysis framework we will follow the structuralists' five structures which they evolve in terms of five sets of functional interrelation.

1. The structure of predication
2. The structure of complementation
3. The structure of modification
4. The structure of subordination
5. The structure of co-ordination.

3.2. THE STRUCTURE OF PREDICATION:

In the structure of predication the structuralists use binary cuts to arrive at two immediate constituents – Subject and Predicate. This means that in this structure one of the two immediate constituents will have to be **Subject** and the other one **Predicate**. (Here the structuralists have used these two categories more or less the same way as the traditionalists).

Now consider the following sentences :

1.

Yasmeen

passed away

Subject Predicate
2.

The book on the table

is mine

Subject Predicate
3.

That he is very intelligent

is beyond doubt

Subject Predicate

3.2.1 THE STRUCTURE OF COMPLEMENTATION:

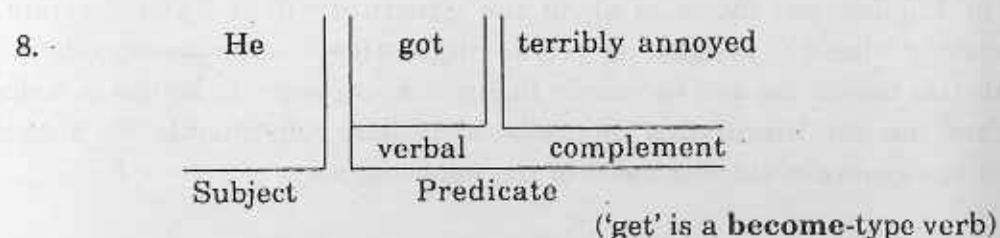
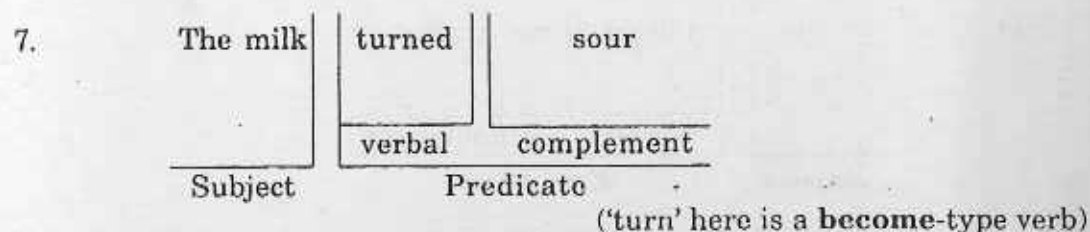
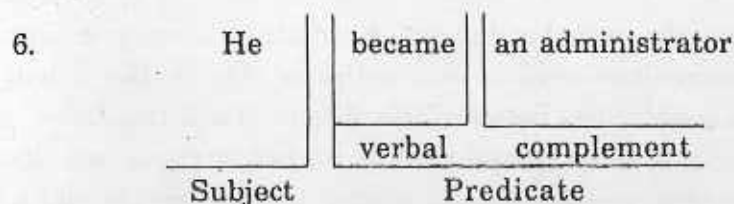
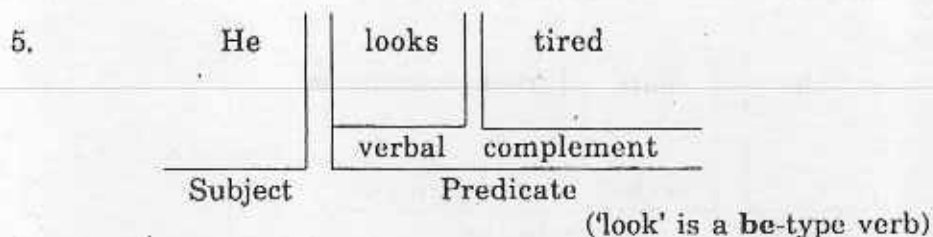
This is also a binary structure in which one constituent is 'verbal' and the other one is 'complement'. For example,

- | | | | |
|----|---------|-----------|------------|
| 4. | John | is | a teacher |
| | | verbal | complement |
| | Subject | Predicate | |

In this structure the complement is grammatically a complement in the sense of traditional grammar. In traditional grammar they say that a complement is an

element without which the sentence remains incomplete and ungrammatical. Therefore, in structures with **be**-type or **become**-type verbs the verb will be functionally called verbal and the elements following the verb will be the complement.

Consider the following sentences with **be**-type and **become**-type verbs.



There are a number of such verbs which function as **be**-type/**become**-type verbs: ‘look’, ‘appear’, ‘seem’, ‘turn’, ‘get’, ‘happen’, etc.

In addition to **complements** being marked or labelled as ‘complements’, the structuralists treat **objects** also as complements. So a sentence with a transitive

verb and its object(s) will be captured the same way. Look at the following examples.

9.	The teacher	loves	her pupils
		verbal	complement
	Subject	Predicate	

10.	She	eats	fried cockroaches
		verbal	complement
	Subject	Predicate	

You have just seen that the verbal-complement structure is easy to capture when the verb is a monotransitive verb (a verb with one object). But it will be difficult to capture the interrelations between the objects of a ditransitive verb (a verb having two objects). If we treat the verb as verbal and the two objects together as complement then we will find it difficult to capture the syntactic relation between the two objects. Examine the following sentence

*11.	He	taught	me linguistics
		verbal	complement
	Subject	Predicate	

Are the two objects **me** and **linguistics** really immediate constituents? Your sense of English and intuition about the structure will tell you that **me** is immediately related to **taught**, as well as **linguistics** is immediately related to **taught**. (He taught me and he taught linguistics – appears to be the meaning). Therefore, **me** and **linguistics** cannot be immediate constituents. So linguists capture the syntax of this sentence in the following way:

He	taught	me	linguistics
	verbal	compl.	
	verbal		complement
Subject	Predicate		

(Please note here that it is not very scientific to call the verb + the first object as the verbal but this is the better of the two options in the framework.)

Let us work out a few more sentences with this structure.

12.	He	asked	me	to do it immediately.
		verbal	compl.	
		verbal		complement
	Subject	Predicate		

(The infinitival phrase 'to do it immediately' is the second object of the ditransitive verb 'asked'.)

13.	I	told	him	that John was leaving for England.
		verbal	compl.	
		verbal		complement
	Subject	Predicate		

(Here the **that**-clause is the second object.)

3.2.2 THE STRUCTURE OF MODIFICATION:

In this binary structure of modification we have two elements — **Head** and **Modifier**. Modifiers usually perform adjectival or adverbial functions. But any element modifying another will be called a **modifier** and that which it modifies will be called a **head**. Look at the following examples:

14.	A	mystery
	Mod.	Head

15.	All	those	wonderful	Ionesco	plays
				Mod.	Head
			Mod.	Head	
		Mod.	Head		
	Mod.	Head			

16.	If you touch her	I	will	kill	you
			Mod.	Head	
			Verbal		Compl.
		Subj.	Pred.		
	Modifier	Head			

17.	When she talks	the	whole	world	listens
			Mod.	Head	
		Mod.		Head	
			Subject		Pred.
	Modifier			Head	

Now let us examine the difference between the two apparently similar structures given below.

18. (a)	They	sleep	in the library.
		Head	Modifier
	Subject		Predicate

18. (b)	They	are	in the library.
		Verbal	Complement
	Subject		Predicate

In 18(a) 'in the library' functions as a modifier of the Head verb 'sleep' and it is not a complement because we can stop after 'sleep'. But in 18(b) the same element is a complement as it occurs after the verb be (are). Thus the functional labelling in IC analysis helps us to capture the structural interrelations in a unique way.

3.2.3 THE STRUCTURE OF SUBORDINATION :

In this binary structure one immediate constituent is **subordinator** and the other is **dependent unit**. Look at the following examples:

19.	The	girl	is	in	the	car
					Mod.	Head
	Mod.	Head	Verbal	Subord.		Dependent unit
					Complement	
	Subject				Predicate	

(The preposition **in** subordinates the following noun phrase **the car**.)

20.

To	err	is	human.
Subord.	Dep. Unit	Verbal	Complement
Subject		Predicate	

(Here the infinitive **to** subordinates the verb phrase **err**.)

21.

John	's	father	is	a	teacher.
Dep. Unit	Subord.			Mod.	Head
Mod.		Head	Verbal	Complement	
Subject			Predicate		

(Here the possessivizer (**'s**) subordinates the noun phrase **John**.)

22.

When	she	talks	the	whole	world	listens.
				Mod.	Head	
	Subj.	Pred.	Mod.	Head		
Subord. Dependent Unit			Subject			predicate
Modifier			Head			

(Here the subordinating conjunction **when** subordinates the sentence **she talks** which is reduced to a subordinate clause to the main clause **the whole world listens**.)

3.2.4 THE STRUCTURE OF CO-ORDINATION:

This is the only structure in IC analysis which is non-binary. The immediate constituents in this structure, therefore, will be more than two — **Independent unit - Co-ordinator - Independent Unit**. The total number of independent units could be as many as possible depending on the structure:

23.

John	and	Mary
Ind. Unit	Co-ord.	Ind. Unit

24.

John	Mary	Dick	and	Sam
Ind. Unit	Ind. Unit	Ind. Unit	Co-ord.	Ind. Unit

25.	I	went	there	and	she	came	away
		Head	Mod.			Head	Mod.
	Subj.	Pred.			Subj.	Pred.	
	Ind. Unit			Co-ord.	Ind. Unit		

26.	She	came	saw	and	conquered
		Ind. Unit	Ind. Unit	Co-ord.	Ind. Unit
	Subj.	Pred.			

Look into the following structures.

This framework of syntactic analysis is different from that of the traditional grammarians. The structuralists' claim that they could analyse any sentence in a language within this framework appeared to be valid during the heyday of American structuralism. This model of syntax could even capture ambiguity and resolve it to a certain extent by showing two different sets of interrelations in two different IC structures.

27. (a)	Baby	swallows	fly
		Verbal	Compl.
	Subj.	Pred.	

(The meaning captured is : Baby swallows the fly.)

27. (b)	Baby	swallows	fly
	Mod	Head	
	Subject		Predicate

(The meaning captured is : Little swallows fly.)

28. (a)	Three	extraordinary	physicians	'	magazines
			D.U.	Sub.	
			Mod.		Head
		Mod.	Head		
		Mod.	Head		

28. (b)	Three	extraordinary	physicians		magazines
		Mod.	Head		
	Mod.		Head		
		Dependent Unit		Sub.	
		Mod.			Head

3.2.5 NON-CONTIGUOUS IC STRUCTURES:

Elements belonging to the same constituent may not always occur in their normal word order. This is true of all human languages. Sentences having such constituents with displaced word order present certain problems in IC analysis. Consider the following interrogative sentence:

29. Have you gone crazy ?

Here the verbal unit **have gone** is non-contiguous because of the inversion. The auxiliary element **have** has been shifted from its normal position to the left of the subject NP **you**. In such cases the linguist would show the discontinuous elements first, rewrite them, and then label them.

Step 1 :	Have	you	gone	crazy?
		Subj.		
	Pred.		Pred.	

Step 2 : This sentence may be rewritten as

You	have	gone	crazy.
	Mod.	Head	
	Verbal		Compl.
Subj.	Predicate		

Let us consider a few more sentences with discontinuant elements.

30.	He	has	already	done it.
-----	----	-----	---------	----------

Rewritten as : Has he done it already?

31.

Neither	John
---------	------

 nor

Jonathan could do it.

Rewritten as :

John	neither nor	Jonathan	could	do	it.
			Mod.	Head	
Ind. Unit	Co-ord.	Ind. Unit	Verbal	Comp	
Subject			Predicate		

3.3. SUMMARY :

Now that we have presented the structural model of syntax in a simplified way rather briefly, you could possibly say that there is nothing revolutionary in this framework. But in spite of it there is no denying the fact that this model had a significant role in the development of the later models of syntax in modern linguistics. It systematized traditional formulations following its own theoretical stance. The framework was first outlined by Leonard Bloomfield in his **Language** (1933) and later elaborated and formalized by the Bloomfieldians. The framework has many weaknesses and limitations and cannot answer many questions satisfactorily but it has drawn our attention to innumerable questions that it has raised. And in the process of trying to understand these questions and solving these problems about language and linguistics, this model appears to be inadequate, mindless and mechanistic, consequently leading to the birth of a more adequate and effective model of syntactic analysis proposed by the new generation of linguists.

3.4. REVIEW QUESTION 1 :

- A. Give immediate constituent analysis of the following English sentences. Use topless box diagrams:
- (i) Drink wet cement and get really stoned.
 - (ii) As you sow so you reap.
 - (iii) Whenever I feel the world is moving too fast I go to the post office.
 - (iv) His wife asked him to clean the dishes.
 - (v) I told her not to play on the railway lines.
 - (vi) He seems to be an honest politician.
 - (vii) But honesty is the best policy.

B. Capture the ambiguity in the following structures through immediate constituent analysis:

- (i) She gave her dog biscuits.
- (ii) The mayor asked the police to stop drinking at midnight.
- (iii) She wanted the bucket on the mat with holes in it.
- (iv) He wants to meet the girl in the library.
- (v) The report that the students are studying is true.

3.5 TRANSFORMATIONAL GENERATIVE SYNTAX :

3.5.1 INTRODUCTION:

In the preceding part of this unit on syntax you have had some idea about the model of syntactic analysis within the structuralist paradigm. This model continued to be the most dominant model of syntax during the four decades of the 20th century from the twenties through the fifties. But the inherent weaknesses of this framework started showing themselves in different levels and with respect to various syntactic structures. As a result of this, the basic assumptions of this approach were questioned and its theoretical foundations were shaken. A completely new model of syntactic analysis was proposed as an alternative to the structuralist model by Noam Chomsky in his famous book **Syntactic Structures** in 1957. This proposal came in the form of a challenge to American structuralism and hence is known as the Chomsky revolution. In the following sections we will try to look into this Chomskyan model of syntax and see why this model is called revolutionary.

3.5.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STRUCTURALIST MODEL :

The model of linguistic analysis proposed by the structuralists had its foundations in Behaviourism in Psychology. As a result, the structuralists' notions about **language, linguistic data, objectives of linguistic study and procedure used in linguistic analysis** were firmly rooted in their commitment to the behaviouristic model of understanding language, language use, language organization and language acquisition.

(i) The structuralists looked upon language only as a form of behaviour — they called it 'verbal behaviour' and they never believed in anything 'mentalistic' or 'cognitive' about language. They thought as Bloomfield says in his **Language** (1933), "Language is the totality of utterances made in a speech community." So language for them was the total number of sentences produced by the native speakers of a language.

But Chomsky rejected this notion about language. Under the influence of cognitivism, he understood language as a mentalistic activity. The sentences or

utterances produced are only what Ferdinand de Saussure called 'parole'. Language is not merely the product but, more importantly, the process responsible for the product. This innate, intuitive judgement about sentence formation, about the well-formedness of utterances is language and this is what Chomsky calls 'competence'. And, therefore, the scientific description of language has to be a scientific description of this 'linguistic competence'.

(ii) For the structuralists, data for linguistic analysis would be a 'linguistic corpus' – a phonetically transcribed version of native speakers' speech collected through informants which the linguist considers to be a representative sample.

But the Chomskyans would consider the whole of a language as data. For them the data is also 'linguistic competence'.

(iii) The goal of linguistics for the structuralists was to identify data, record it, describe it within their descriptive framework, and finally classify data into categories or classes at different levels of representation. You will remember that they did apply this principle of identification and classification at the level of phonology – speech sounds first identified and then classified as vowels/consonants, high vowels/low vowels, plosives/fricatives/nasals, etc. At the level of morphology and syntax the same practice continued and we had various classifications of morphemes, words and constituents of a sentence. The structuralist did perform this activity of classification quite rigorously and meticulously in order to make linguistics an autonomous science.

But is classification or should it ever be the ultimate goal of a science? Chomsky calls it a lower level science as it is taxonomic (classificatory). It fails to capture what a science (or an empirical science) does. So the Chomskyans would say that linguistics has to construct a comprehensive theory on language, if it has to be a science in the real sense of the term. The structural linguists have failed to give us any empirical theory which would explain language organization and language acquisition.

Only a transformational generative model of grammar could adequately capture language through empirical theory construction and raise linguistics to the level of a science.

(iv) And the procedure for language study, therefore, cannot be the structuralists' procedure which is highly ambitious (they used 'discovery procedure'), but a procedure which is less ambitious and workable (the Chomskyans call it 'evaluation procedure'). The structuralists, therefore, had a 'physicalist' approach to language (language as 'verbal behaviour'). They could conceive of language only in its sentential reality or surface reality. For them the utterance or the sentence as produced was the only reality to be captured. So the sentence was explained by them in terms of the linguistic interrelation that was visible or perceivable at the level of the surface reality. This led to their inability to account for innumerable linguistic structures in which surface level evidence was inadequate for explaining them.

In order to show that dependence on the surface level of the sentence is in itself a limitation for the real or adequate explanation of the syntactic reality, Chomsky presents a few cases of structural interrelations.

3.3.3 CASES OF STRUCTURAL AMBIGUITY :

We saw earlier that certain cases of structural ambiguity could be resolved within the structuralist syntactic framework. But there are other cases of structural ambiguity which cannot be explained in terms of the available surface interrelations between the constituents/immediate constituents of a sentence. For example, let us examine the following structure:

Visiting	relatives	can be a nuisance.
Mod.	Head	
Subject		Predicate

The structuralist would capture only one meaning of the ambiguous structure – visiting relatives - in the above way of treating **visiting** as modifier of the Head **relatives**. And, as we can see it, the meaning captured is – **Relatives who visit (someone)** can be a nuisance. But any speaker of English intuitively knows that this structure has another meaning – **For someone to visit (his) relatives** can be a nuisance. And this second meaning cannot be captured by the structuralists in their IC analysis framework.

This shows that the grammar of the language fails to capture what the native speakers perceive. The grammar can give us only half the truth, and, therefore, according to the transformationalists, is not an adequate model of scientific description. An effective model of grammar must capture the two meanings (on the basis of two different sets of interrelations between the constituents) : (i) **relatives** subject and **visit** verb (ii) **visit** verb and **relatives** object. Then only the structural ambiguity in this sentence can be accounted for and resolved.

3.3.4 CASE OF CONSTRUCTIONAL HOMONYMY:

When two structures are similar but are not understood similarly, they are said to have constructional homonymy. Look at the following sentences:

Jonathan is easy to please.

Jonathan is eager to please.

These two sentences are structurally similar. Both have the construction – Subj Noun Phrase + Verb + Adjective + Infinitival phrase

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
Jonathan + is + easy/eager + to please

But in spite of this apparent similarity these two sentences are understood differently. The first sentence, as you know, means "It is easy to please Jonathan", but the second one means -- "Jonathan is eager for (Jonathan to please someone)". This meaning difference is due to the difference of the syntactic relations between **Jonathan** and **please** in the two structures. Whereas in the first sentence **please** is the verb and **Jonathan** is its object (someone pleases Jonathan), in the second sentence **Jonathan** is the subject and **please** is its verb (Jonathan pleases someone). The structuralists, it is argued, cannot capture this difference in their syntactic analysis of these sentences; they would treat them similarly as they appear to be similar in the structure on the surface. So structural syntax fails to capture once again (as in the cases of structural ambiguity) what the native speakers capture intuitively.

Please consider the following cases of constructional homonymy:

1. (a) The plucking of flowers.
(b) The rising of the moon.
2. (a) The visitors are asked to leave the hall by the president.
(b) The visitors are asked to leave the hall by the side door.

3.5.5 CASES OF DELETION :

Sometimes in a language two different sentences appear as one due to the deletion of some elements from their basic structures.

'Mary loves linguistics more than her husband.' This sentence appears to have structural ambiguity because it has two meanings. But this ambiguity can be resolved if we can reconstruct the sentence in its original structures (two structures).

(a) Mary loves linguistics more than her husband (loves linguistics).

(b) Mary loves linguistics more than (she loves) her husband. From these two sentences -- (a) and (b) -- the elements in the brackets have been deleted, thereby leading these two sentences to the same structural configuration. Thus the ambiguity in the sentence can be resolved in terms of the feature of deletion.

But the structuralist explanation for this sentence would not be able to capture the ambiguity as they have no mechanism to retrieve deleted elements because of their theoretical position that a sentence is what appears as the speaker's speech and not what the speaker intends to speak. They do not believe in anything 'understood' or 'underlying' or 'deleted' in a structure.

Once again, the structuralist model of syntax fails to capture the native speaker's intuition about cases of deletion.

3.5.6 CASES OF PARAPHRASE RELATION :

Let us consider the following sentences:

1. (a) The police diverted the traffic.
(b) The traffic was diverted by the police.
(c) The traffic was diverted by the country road.

Sentences 1(a) and (b) are constructionally different but they are understood similarly by the native speakers of English. And sentences 1(b) and (c) are very similar in structure but understood differently in spite of their apparent similarity. On the basis of their surface similarity the structuralists would give similar syntactic description for 1(b) and (c) and because of the structural difference between 1(a) and (b) they would give different structural configurations for 1(a) and (b). This means the grammar goes contrary to the native speaker's intuition. We know that 1(a) and (b) are active and passive counterparts of the same sentence and they have paraphrase interrelations between them. On the other hand, in 1(b) the prepositional phrase **by the police** is understood not as a mere prepositional phrase but as the **by + NP** structure in a passive construction where the **NP** following **by** is the real agent subject; in 1(c) **by the country road** is understood as a prepositional phrase (indicating direction) and the agent is not present in the structure. This fundamental difference is perceptible to the native speaker and therefore, has to be captured in the syntactic configuration. But the structural grammarians fail to capture it. They fail because they can't capture paraphrase relation between 1(a) and (b) and constructional homonymy between 1(b) and (c).

3.5.7 SUMMARY :

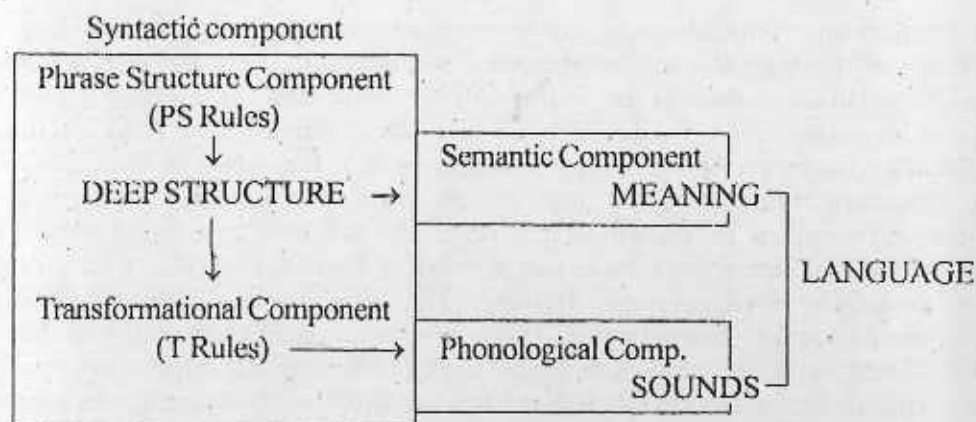
These and many other kinds of syntactic structure that the structural linguists fail to analyse the way the native speakers understand them primarily because they analyse sentences as they are in their surface manifestations. But the surface structure is a level, as we have seen already, where the real or logical interrelations between elements in a sentence are not always captured. The surface structure hides a lot of things which the native speaker's intuition can find out and, therefore, an adequate and scientific model of grammar should also find out. If the surface structure is not a reliable level for verification of actual relations or undistorted relations between the constituents of a sentence, the grammar needs to go to a level where these are visible and capturable. Following this line of argument Chomsky realizes that the complete dependence on the surface structures of sentences is the reason for the structuralist syntax to have been so inadequate, incomplete and, therefore, 'unscientific' in the right sense of the term.

Please notice here that the pendulum has once again swung to the other extreme. Those who rejected the traditional framework on the ground of its 'unscientificness' are being discarded by the linguists of the latter school on the same ground. Chomsky's argument seems to be that the structuralist model is inherently incapable of handling human language which has various levels of understanding and syntactic interpretation.

That is why Chomsky says that a really adequate grammar of a language has to be "an externalization" of native speaker's 'competence'. We have to assume, therefore, that the 'surface' reality of a sentence is not the only reality; there is

another linguistic reality of a sentence beyond this surface reality. And Chomsky calls this reality the 'deep structure' reality. So he postulates that every sentence has to be studied and captured in terms of these two levels of representation – the surface structure level and the deep structure level. We need the deep structure representation of a sentence because the surface structure does not give us the 'whole truth' about a sentence. And our postulation of the deep structure would help us to identify and explain all kinds of sentences – actual as well as potential. For Chomsky, therefore, the deep structure is the level for semantic representation. It is that level where all real and logical interrelations between elements in a sentential configuration are captured. So it is this level that helps us to capture all the meanings of a sentence.

But Chomsky's postulation has a number of implications. In order to capture semantic representation at the level of the deep structure the linguist has to construct a set of rules (Syntactic rules) which will 'generate' the deep structure of a sentence ('generate' in generative grammar means not to produce, but "to explain or enumerate explicitly"). At that level semantic interpretation(s) will take place and after that the deep structure will be mapped on to its surface structure with the help of another set of syntactic rules. The first set of rules Chomsky calls **Phrase Structure Rules (PSR)** and the second set of rules are **Transformational Rules (TR)**. So his scheme of grammar is something like the following :



This somewhat detailed discussion was necessary for you to understand the theoretical position of the framework called TG (Transformational Generative) Grammar. It was also relevant for your understanding of the development of grammar during the last several decades. Now you are familiar with all the three schools of linguistic analysis and their strengths and weaknesses to a certain extent. You have already seen that TG is not a modification of structural grammar. It is a replacement of the structural framework. Therefore, you will see from now on a different approach in syntactic analysis where we will capture or try to capture interrelations between elements at the level of the deep structure.

3.5.8 REVIEW QUESTION - 2 :

- (i) Mention two major weaknesses of structural grammar. And briefly explain why we call them weaknesses. (100 words)
- (ii) What is constructional homonymy? Give examples. (60 words)
- (iii) What is the difference between ambiguity in structural ambiguity and ambiguity due to deletion of elements? Give examples and illustrations. (60 words)
- (iv) What does Chomsky mean by 'deep structure' in transformational grammar? What are the motivations for postulating 'deep structure'? (150 words)

Now that you are familiar with the theoretical position of the generative grammarians, we can get into the details of their practical analytical framework. We have told you already that this framework tries to capture a structure the way the speakers of the language understand it.

Our plan is to begin with the parts of the sentence like the noun phrase, the verbal group, the verb phrase, etc. and their constituents and then capture the sentence as a higher unit. And in doing so we will not get guided by the surface relations but by the Deep Structure relations. And the most convenient device for doing so will be the use of the tree diagram. The tree and its branches will give us the constitutional picture of the sentence from the point of view of the native speaker's intuition about the sentence.

3.6. THE NOUN PHRASE (NP) STRUCTURE :

We have already mentioned that a Noun Phrase is a part of a sentence. But before discussing the noun phrase we must clearly state what we mean by a sentence. Many traditional grammars (traditional school grammars, to be precise) define a sentence as a group of words which "express a complete thought". This definition is not very satisfactory because we may not be very sure about : "what is a complete thought?"

Take for example the following sentences:

(1) My neighbours were shouting at each other very loudly.

(2) I could not concentrate on my studies.

(3) My neighbours were shouting at each other very loudly and I could not concentrate on my studies.

If (1) expresses a complete thought and (2) also does the same, what is (3) then? Does it express one complete thought or two? But you all know that all of these three are sentences. We find the question raised here a little disturbing because the definition of a sentence as an expression of a complete thought is meaning based and therefore, vague. The structuralists banished meaning from the domain

of linguistics because of this. But we know that the transformational generativists reinstated meaning, though very cautiously, in linguistics. They recognized meaning as an important element in language but did not use meaning as a criterion or tool for analysis.

In our syntax course, therefore, we will define 'sentence' by trying to capture its features, both functional and structural, in a variety of ways at the same time. **Collins Cobuild English Grammar** (1990) defines Sentence in the following way:

Sentence: a group of words, which express a statement, question or command. A sentence usually has a verb and a subject and may be a simple sentence, consisting of one clause, or a complex sentence, consisting of two or more clauses. A sentence in writing has a capital letter at the beginning and a full stop, question mark, or exclamation mark at the end.

So 'sentence' is defined comprehensively in terms of (i) functions (statement, question, command), (ii) constituents (Verb, Subject), (iii) types (Simple, Complex) and (iv) punctuation.

A sentence, thus, can be of three (or may be four) types — **simple**, having one independent clause, **complex**, having one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses, **compound**, having more than one independent clause and **compound-complex** which has more than one independent clause and one or more dependent clause(s).

Simple sentence: John loves Mary.

Complex sentence: If you work hard, you will do better.

Compound sentence: John loves Mary but Mary hates John.

Compound-complex sentence: He is a fool and you know that fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

This classification of sentences is similar to that in traditional grammar to a great extent. But there are differences also. In modern syntax we use terms like **clause** and **phrase** very differently. For us, a clause is more comprehensive and inclusive. Verbal structures with **-ing** and structures with the infinitive **to + Verb Phrase** will be treated as clauses (non-finite). For example, the following sentences have clauses in them which the traditionalists would call phrases :

(a) She wants **to live for hundreds of years**.

(b) She enjoys **listening to music**.

(The underlined elements are clauses in modern grammar. These two sentences in our syntactic analysis, therefore, are treated as complex sentences and not simple sentences.

Phrases will be used in the sense of parts of a clause. So a sentence has (or may have) clauses, clauses have phrases and phrases are made of words. A noun phrase, prepositional phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase, etc. function as parts of

clauses and when the clause itself is an independent sentence the phrases naturally are parts of that sentence.

3.6.1 BASIC SENTENCE (OR CLAUSE) PATTERNS :

The basic sentence patterns in English are of the following types

- (1) Jyoti sings (Subject – Verbal)
S V
- (2) She is a teacher (Subject – Verbal – Complement)
S V C
- (3) He loves cricket (Subject – Verbal – Object)
S V O
- (4) Father bought me a shirt (Subject – Verbal – Indirect Object – Direct Obj.)
S V O_i O_d
- (5) John made Mary his secretary (Subj – V – Obj. – Comp.)
S V O C

If we expand these constituents of the basic sentence types we can do it by expanding the phrases under these functional categories into clauses. So subject NP can be expanded into a clause (or sentence for that matter) an object NP or a complement can also be expanded in the similar way.

In the basic sentence type, therefore, we have the essential elements which are obligatory elements or nuclear elements (like S, V, O, C) without which the sentence would be ungrammatical. But it is also possible to have optional or marginal elements in a sentence which can be dropped and yet the sentence would remain 'grammatical' or 'acceptable'. Such marginal elements are called **adjuncts**. Examine the following sentences:

- (a) She was listening to my lecture attentively
S V O Adjunct
- (b) She slept in the library
S V Adjunct

In these two sentences the adjunct is a grammatically (not semantically) redundant element. But even then, an adjunct can also be expanded into a clause.

After this brief discussion on the sentence and the basic sentence patterns along with various functional units in a sentence you would like to come back to the Noun Phrase (NP).

A phrase, we repeat, is a group of words which constitute part of a clause (or sentence). A noun phrase then is a group of words in which the head is a noun.

In the same way, an adjective phrase has an adjective as its head, an adverb phrase an adverb as its head, a prepositional phrase a preposition as its head. And

in a verb phrase we have a verb (or a verbal group, to be precise) as its head.

When we say that in a noun phrase the noun is the head, what are the other elements in it other than the head? The other elements, if any, would naturally be the modifiers of the head noun.

Let us take a few examples.

1. girl (NP consisting of a noun only without any modifiers)
2. a beautiful girl (NP consisting of the head noun 'girl' and the premodifiers 'a' and 'beautiful')
3. girls from a respectable family (NP consisting of the head noun 'girls' and the post-modifier which is a prepositional phrase 'from a respectable family').
4. a beautiful girl from a respectable family (NP consisting of a head noun, premodifiers and a post-modifier)

You will have realized that a premodifier occurs before the head noun and a post-modifier comes after the head noun. And there can be more than one on either side of the head noun.

In this course we will discuss six major structures of the noun phrase.

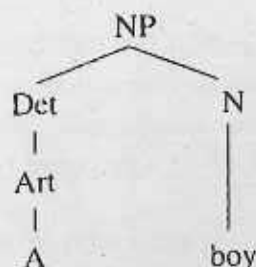
THE NP WITH PREMODIFIER(S) :

We had said already that an NP can occur without any pre- or post-modifiers. In that case we will capture the structure of the NP in the following way with the help of a tree diagram :

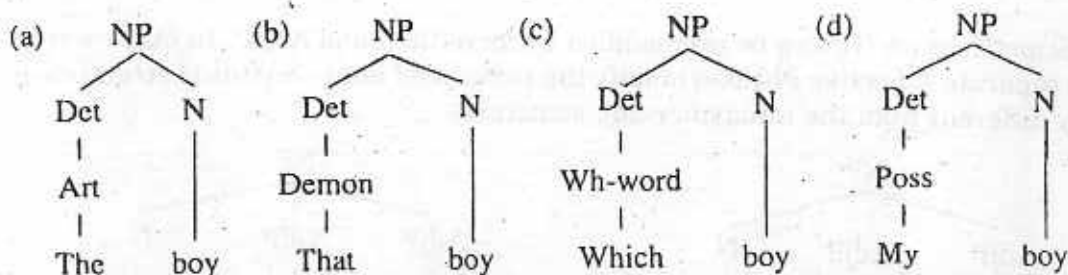


Now if an NP has premodifiers, they will be captured in terms of branches coming from the node NP at the left hand side of the head noun. For example,

3.6.1.1 NP → Determiner — N

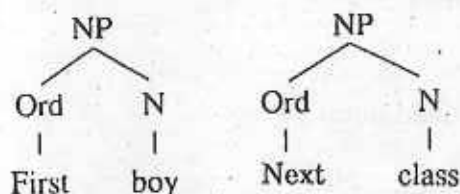


Determiners can be of four types – Articles (a, an, the), Demonstratives (this, that, these, those), wh-words (which, what) and the possessive.



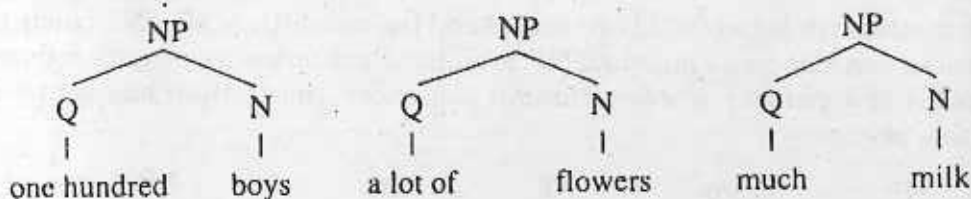
3.6.1.2 NP → ORDINAL - N :

An ordinal refers to a serial number, like first, second, third, fourth, next, last, etc.



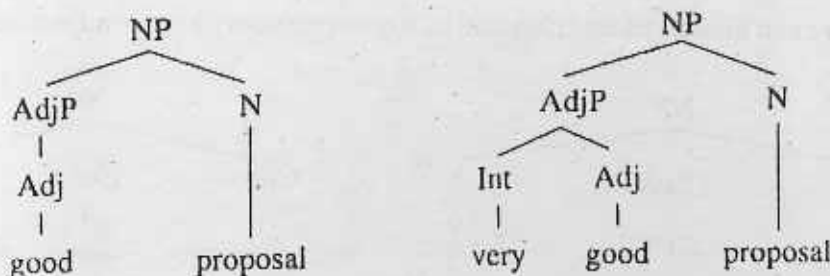
3.6.1.3 NP → QUANTIFIER - N :

A quantifier refers to quantity, number, amount, etc. and it includes what some linguists refer to as cardinal.

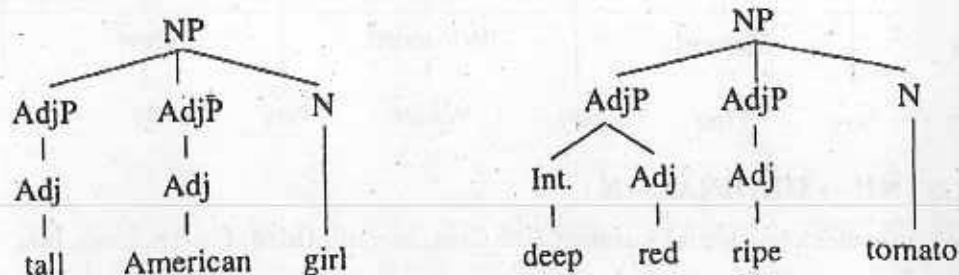


3.6.1.4 NP → ADJ. PHRASE - N :

The Adjective phrase occurs before the Noun and modifies it. The Adjective Phrase can also contain its own premodifier which is called an Intensifier (or adverb). For example,



Sometimes an NP can be premodified by more than one Adj P. In other words, two separate Adjective Phrases modify the same head noun. So this is structurally very different from the intensifier-adj. structure.



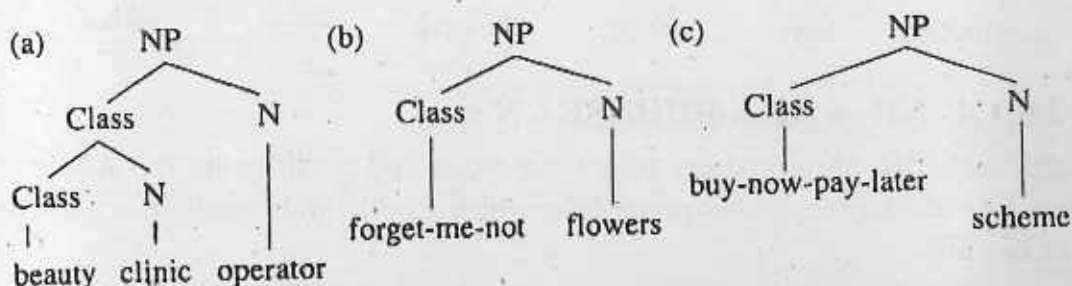
3.6.1.5 NP → CLASSIFIER – N :

A classifier is an NP which modifies the head noun.

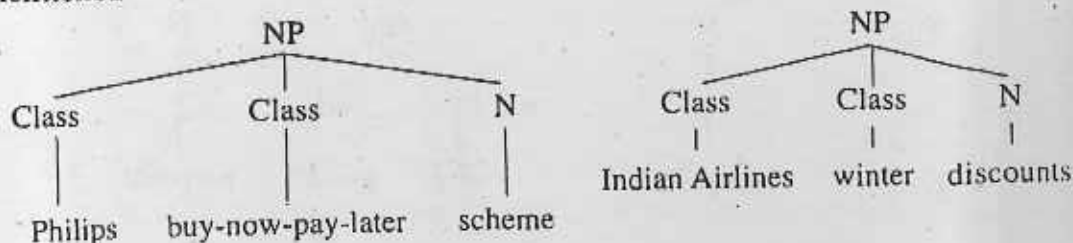


Please distinguish between this structure and the one with AdjP – N Structure.

A classifier can also be a compound NP, a 'clubbed' sentence (a sentence reduced to the status of a phrase) or even 'clubbed sentences' (more than one sentence reduced to a phrase):



Classifier can also be more than one in a noun phrase like the adjectives already mentioned



Both the classifiers modify the headnouns in these structures.

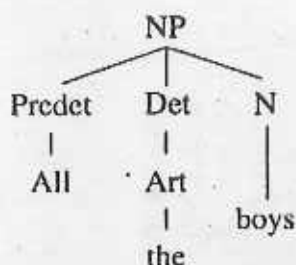
While parsing these structures you will have to depend on your sense of the constituency relations between the elements in an NP. Make sure if the premodifiers are two separate classifiers or one classifier containing a classifier and a noun as under (a) above.

Now, these premodifiers can occur individually in an NP structure as we have seen in the examples or they may occur in combinations between themselves. But their order of occurrence has to be systematic, as shown in the following Phrase Structure rule:

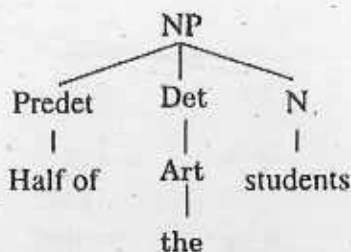
$NP \rightarrow (Det) (ord) (Q) (AdjP) (Classifier) N$

Notice that the brackets indicate optionality. The elements in the brackets may occur in an NP structure or may not.

Sometimes an element (or elements) may occur before the determiner which is called a **predeterminer**, for example, see the structure of the following NP:



All the boys

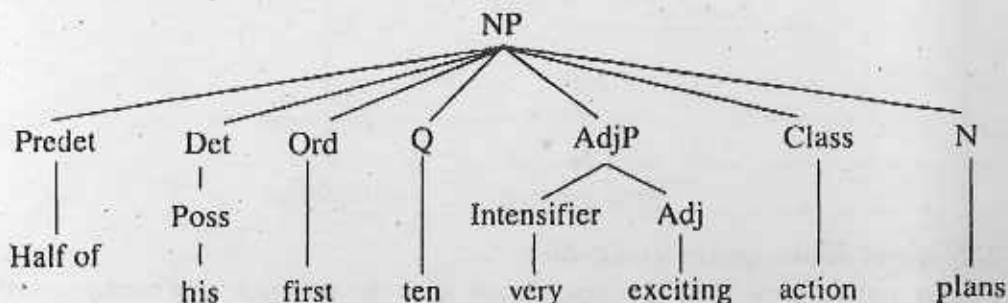


Half of the students

As it appears, the predeterminer is an item which occurs only when there is a determiner after it. Otherwise it would pass as a quantifier (Q).

Let us now examine the fullest expansion of the NP.

$NP \rightarrow (Predet) (Det) (Ord) (Q) (Adj P) (Class) Noun$

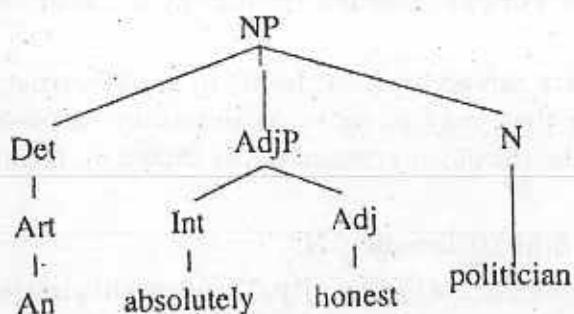


Half of his first ten very exciting action plans

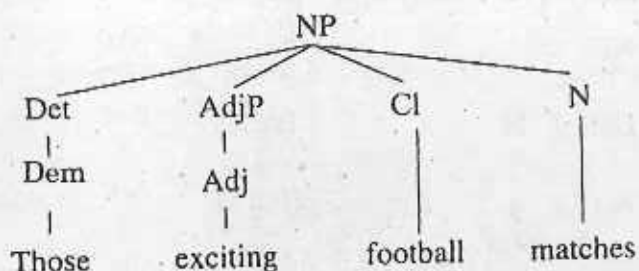
This NP structure with premodifiers, therefore, may have all the premodifiers present in the structure or none of them present in the structure, leaving the head

noun singly as the NP.

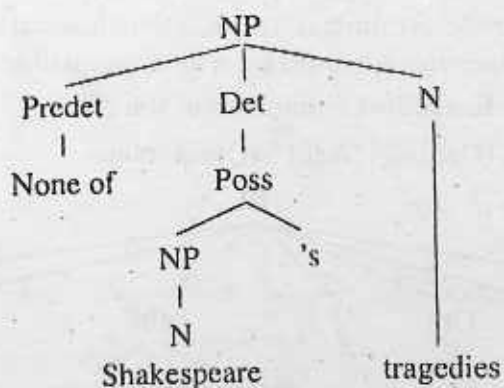
Consider the Noun Phrase structures of some NPs worked out. This will help you in understanding the possible variations in the structure.



1. An absolutely honest politician



2. Those exciting football matches



3. None of Shakespeare's tragedies

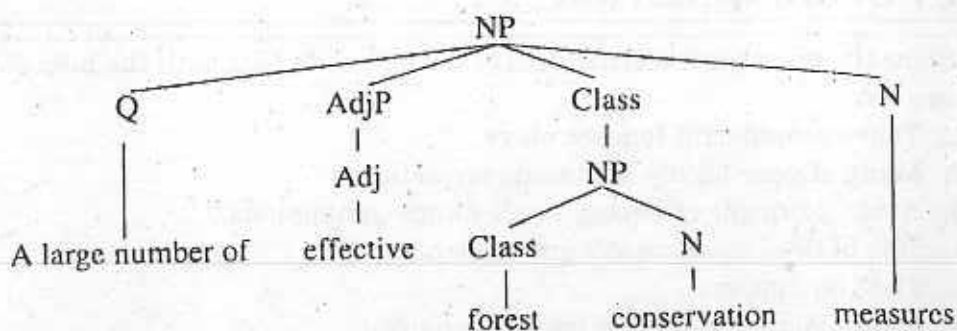
Please notice here that the possessive as a determiner can contain within it another NP whose structure we need to capture. And the structure for that is:

Det → Poss

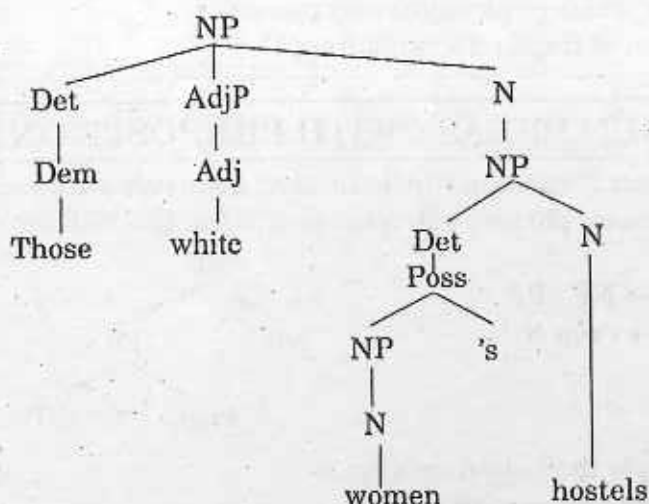
Poss → NP - 's

(This is exactly the structure of the NP above.)

4. A large member of effective forest conservation measures

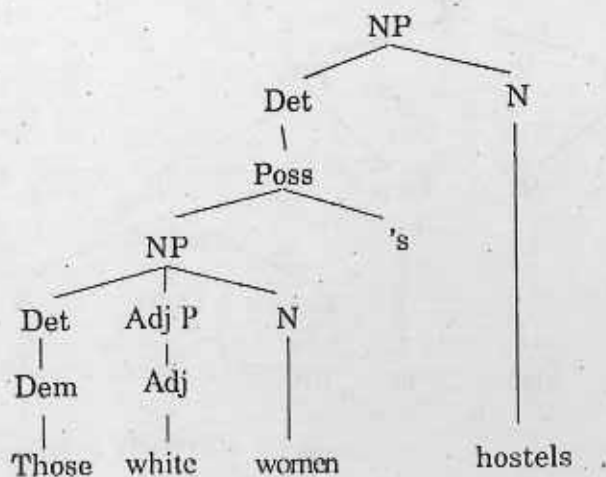


5. (a) 'Those white women's hostels. (ambiguous)



(b)

(The hostels are white)



3.7 REVIEW QUESTION 5 :

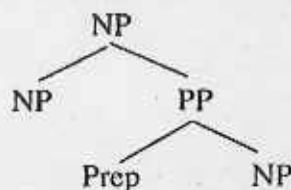
Show the noun phrase structures of the following NPs with the help of tree diagrams:

1. Those wonderful Ionesco plays.
2. Many of your highly ambitious projects.
3. Keats' principle of beauty in all things (ambiguous).
4. 50% of the Department's girl students.
5. The last supper.
6. A very young petroleum transfer engineer.
7. Some of yours.
8. A lot of them.
9. UGC pay scales implementation issue.
10. The Queen of England's supporters.

3.8 THE NOUN PHRASE WITH PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE :

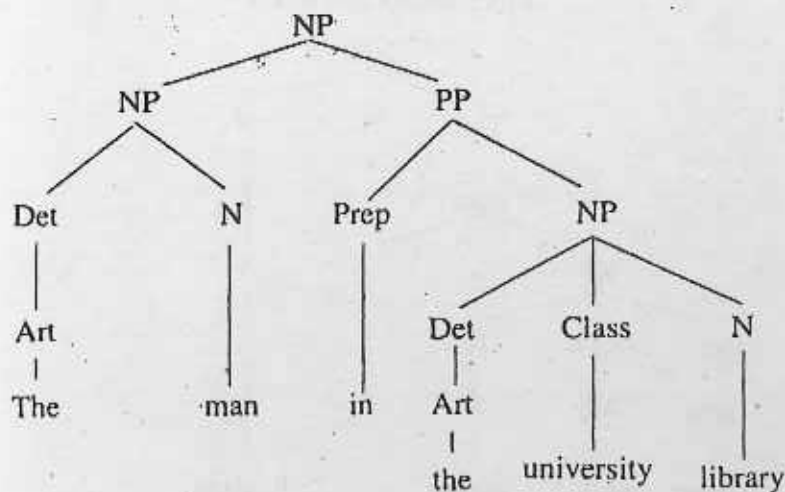
As we have Noun Phrases in which the head noun has a number of premodifiers, we can also have noun phrases with post-modifiers. The PSR for this NP structure is :

$NP \rightarrow NP \ PP$
 $PP \rightarrow Prep \ NP$

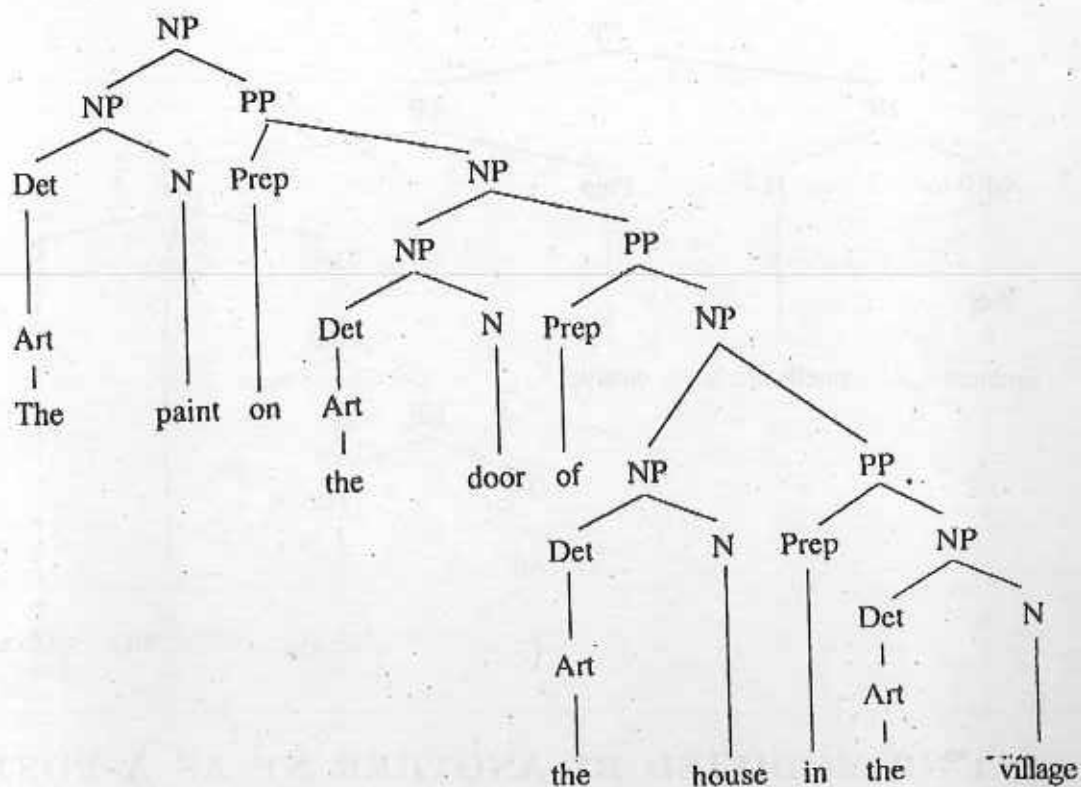


Take for example the following NPs:

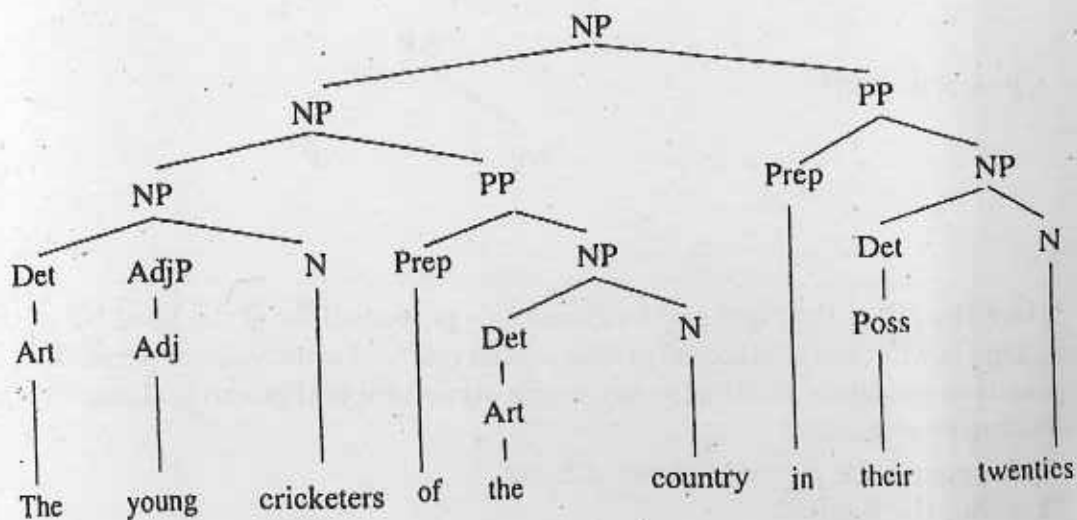
1. The man in the university library



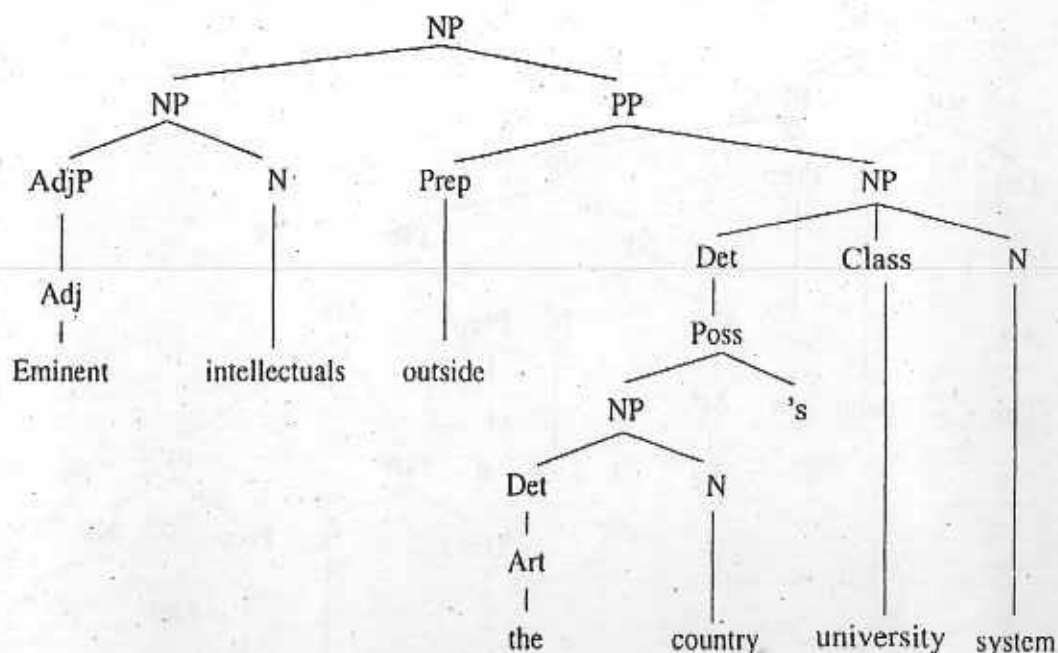
2. The paint on the door of the house in the village.



3. The young cricketers of the country in their twenties.



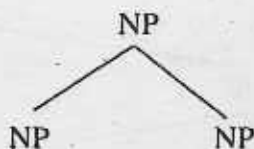
4. Eminent intellectuals outside the country's university system



3.8.1 NP MODIFIED BY ANOTHER NP AS A POST-MODIFIER:

This structure is the following.

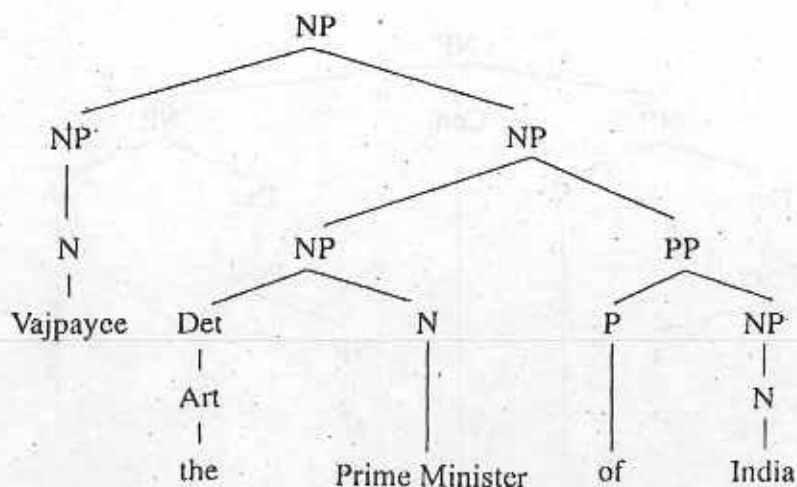
NP → NP — NP



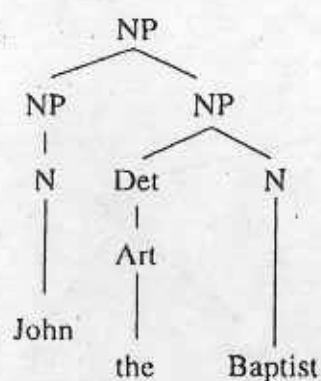
Here the NP at the right end functions as a post-modifier of the head NP at the left. This is what the traditional grammarians referred to as Noun in Apposition or Appositive structure. This has a very simple structural configuration. Look into the following examples :

1. Vajpayee, the prime Minister of India
2. John, the Baptist
3. Frank Palmer, the famous linguist

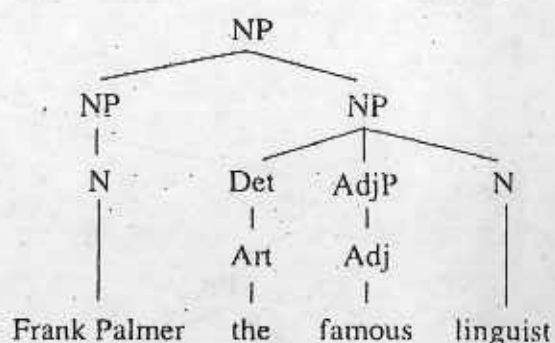
(1)



(2)



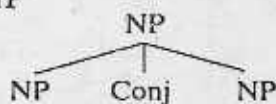
(3)



3.8.2 TWO OR MORE NOUN PHRASES CONJOINED :

As a recursive property of language, two or more NPs can be conjoined with each other by a coordinating conjunction.

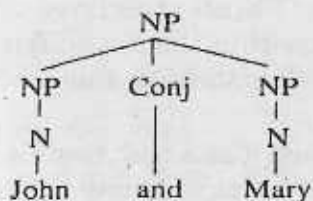
NP → NP – conjunction – NP



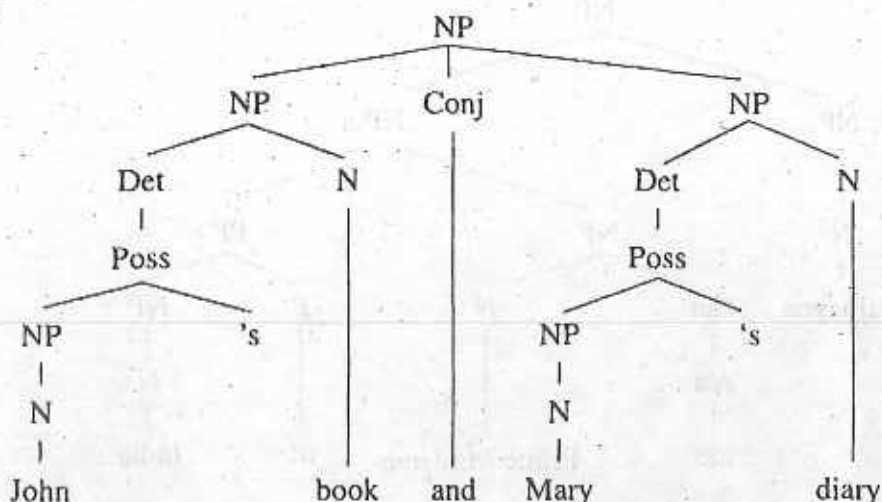
Take, for instance, structures like :

1. John and Mary
2. John's book and Mary's diary
3. The man in the room and the girl in the car

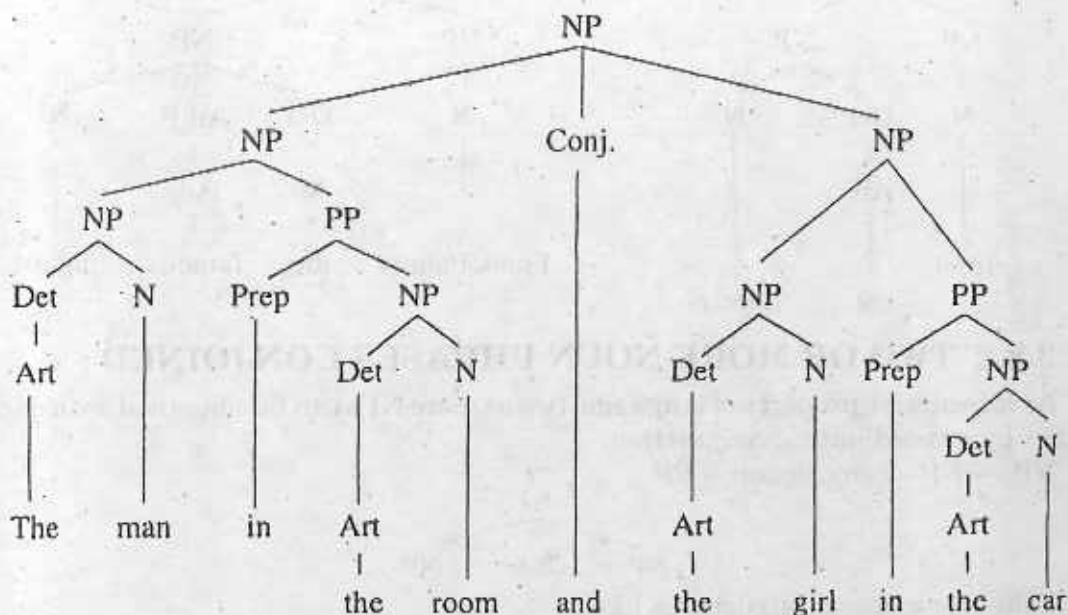
(1).



(2).



(3).



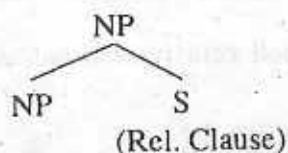
3.8.3 NP CONTAINING A RELATIVE CLAUSE :

In the previous four structures we had the Noun Phrase structures without any clause (or sentence). They all had only phrases within them modifying the NP either as a premodifier or as a post-modifier or an NP containing another NP or NPs within a coordinate structure.

But an NP can also have a whole clause modifying it as a post-modifier. In other words, we can have an NP followed by a relative clause (what the traditional

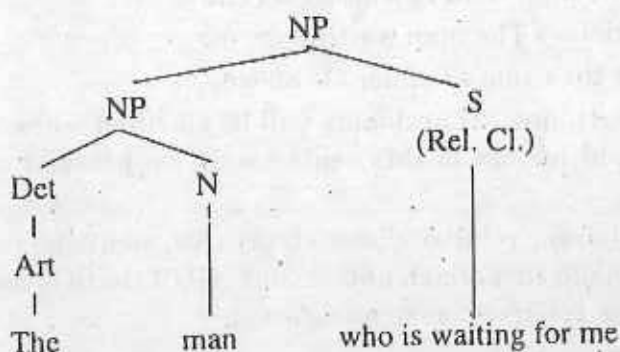
grammars called an adjective clause) and this relative clause (or Sentence) modifies this antecedent NP. So we can formulate a PS rule to capture this structure:

NP \rightarrow NP — S (Rel. Clause)



Let us examine the following structures:

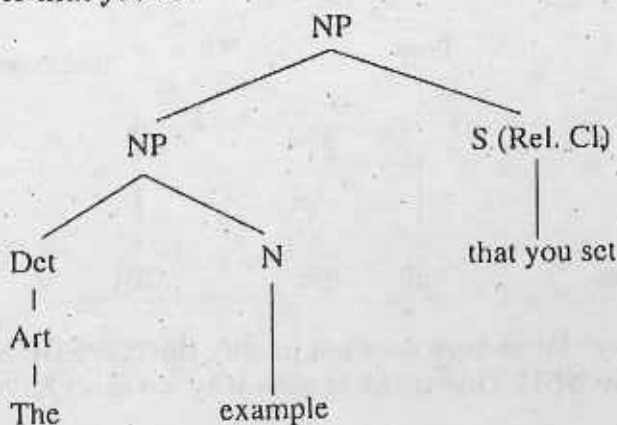
1. The man who is waiting for me



The details of the sentence (or the relative clause) we ignore now because the sentential structure we have not yet introduced to you. We will show the details of it later when we will be drawing deep structure tree diagrams for sentences. Until then just remember that the right hand side S in this structure is a relative clause which contains a relative pronoun (**who** in this case) and this clause modifies the NP' occurring before it.

Let's work out a few more problems.

2. The example that you set



Sometimes we see the relative pronoun being deleted in the surface structure. This does not mean that the relative pronoun is not there; it is very much there but it is not realized in the structure. So the structural configuration of an NP—'the example you set' will be the same as above.

It is also possible to have a further reduced relative clause, as in the Noun Phrase —

The man waiting for me.

This sentence in the deep structure is a fully developed relative clause/sentence but in its derivation from the deep to the surface structure the relative pronoun (**who**) along with the verb **be** has been deleted by a transformational rule.

The man **who is** waiting for me

Rel. Pronoun + (be) deletion → The man waiting for me .

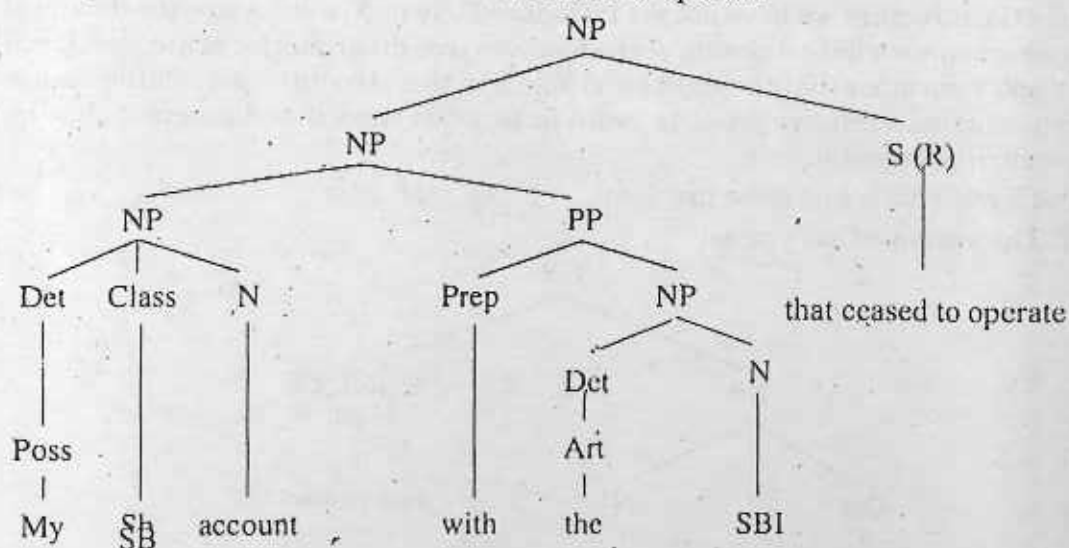
So the structure remains the same as under (1) above.

Please don't worry too much now. Your doubts will be clarified when we show you in detail the derivational history of this sentence as we proceed with this course on syntax.

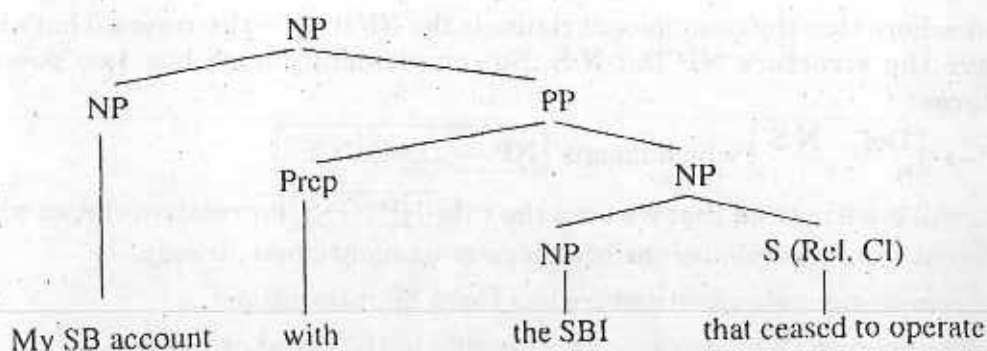
While describing and explaining relative clause structures, please be sure of the scope of relativization and make sure which antecedent NP (if there is more than one NP before the clause) the relative clause modifies.

See the following structure:

3. My SB account with the SBI that ceased to operate



Notice that the relative clause here does not modify the NP 'SBI' but the NP 'my SB account with the SBI'. This is the reason why we can't have the following structure:



Here the meaning captured is – the SBI ceased to operate though the intended meaning is my SB account ceased to operate.

3.8.4 NP AS A COMPLEMENT CLAUSE :

In a complement clause (or Sentence) structure the NP itself is the complement clause unlike what we have seen in an NP structure having a relative clause. The difference between the two, therefore, is : A relative clause modifies an NP but a complement clause is an NP. The traditional grammarian called it (comp. clause) a noun clause because of this.

The structure is represented by the PS Rule

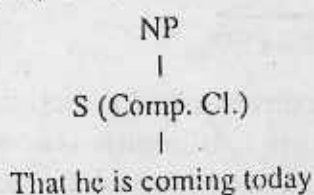
$$NP \rightarrow S \quad NP$$

|
S (Comp. Cl.)

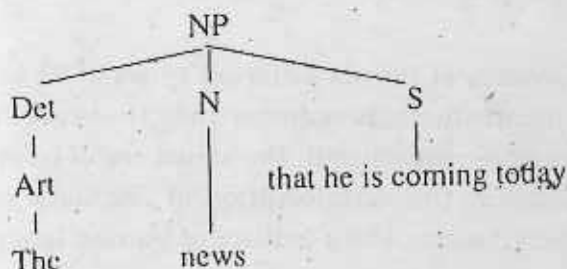
For example, let us examine the structure of the following NP:

1. That he is coming today

We can also have a slightly different structure.



2. The news that he is coming today



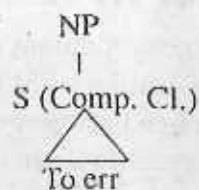
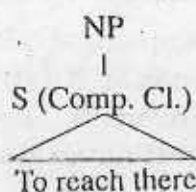
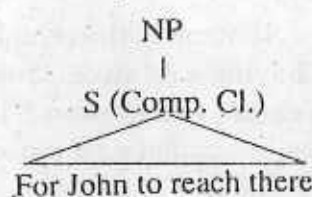
Notice here that the complement clause is the NP itself – **the news**. That's why we have the structure NP Det-N-S. So complement clause has two possible structures:

$NP \rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Det} \quad N \quad S \\ S \end{array} \right\}$ which means $NP \rightarrow (Det) (N) S$

You will have noticed that we used the rule $NP \rightarrow NP-S$ for relative clause which is different from the rule for the complement as mentioned already.

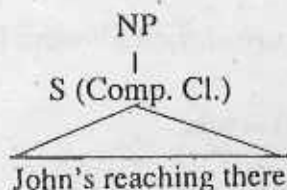
The complement clause structure has three manifestations.

- (i) That clause (We have seen this already in the given example).
- (ii) For ... to clause which in the surface structure has the appearance of an infinitival phrase.
- (3). For John to reach there or to reach there / to err)



(iii) Poss ... ing Structure as in the NP below.

(4). John's reaching there



You will see later that all these three surface structure forms of the complement clause have the same deep structure configuration (as in 1 (or 2), 3 and 4) having completely reconstructed complement sentences. For capturing the NP structure we are using a triangle to show the complement clause only; its details will be captured when we will work out deep structure tree diagrams for various sentences in complete detail.

Now, you must have an awareness of the six different types of Noun Phrases that we have shown you with illustrations. Remember that these six structures have the possibility of incorporating each other in the structure of complex NPs. This is structuring and restructuring the manifestation of linguistic creativity. And this is not a property of the NP alone, but a feature of human language.

3.8.5 REVIEW QUESTION 4 :

Analyse the structures of the following noun phrases :

1. The man on the deck whose identity is not known.
2. The men in the village across the river behind the mountain.
3. All the four very good hits to the boundary.
4. The history of short story genre in Australia.
5. The Asian Team Championship to be held in China.
6. The vast fund of ill-will existing in the world at this moment.
7. The designer's modest beginning in the eighties with a handful of dresses.
8. The Nehru Gold Cup soccer tournament played at Kochi.
9. Anita Desai's novel, **Voices in the City**.
10. A servile existence within the rigid confines of a traditional Hindu family.

REVIEW QUESTION 5 :

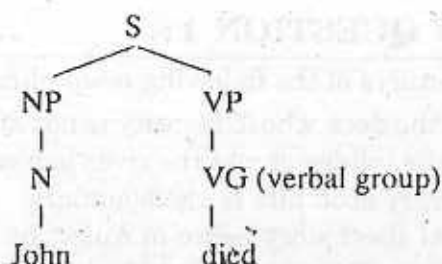
Read the following passages and then capture the structures of the underlined noun phrases:

- (i) To avoid a traffic bottleneck I turned around in the driveway of one of our town's banks. On my way out I saw a prominently displayed sign. It read : 'we wish you would use our bank as much as you use our driveway.'
- (ii) Perhaps the most damning evidence of environmental contamination around the UCIL factory comes from Srishti a New Delhi-based group which released its report recently. Besides drinking water samples, the group analysed vegetable grown in the aicas...

3.8.6 THE VERB PHRASE :

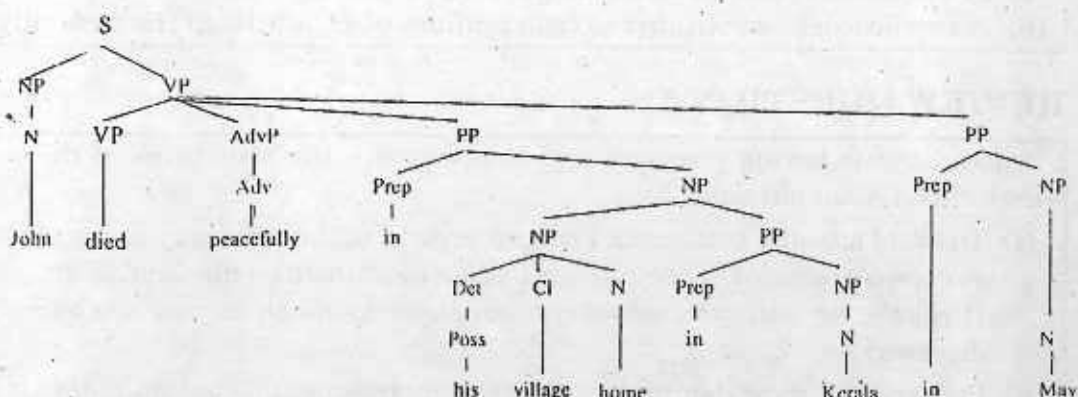
In the basic structure of a simple sentence in English we have a subject Noun Phrase and a Verb Phrase. The Verb Phrase is what the traditional grammarians call predicate and even the structuralists also call it the predicate in their IC analysis framework. The Verb Phrase (known as the VP) contains an obligatory element verbal (which may be a single word unit or a group of items together called the verbal group) and other optional elements. These elements are, as we have seen in the basic sentence patterns, complements (which can be Noun Phrases or Adjective Phrases or Prepositional Phrases, etc.), indirect object, direct object (the objects are Noun Phrases), adjuncts (which can be Prepositional Phrases; Adverb Phrases, etc.). We call all these elements optional because we can have a sentence without them and the only element without which we can't have a sentence or a VP is the verbal or the verbal group. For example, we can have a sentence – '**John died**' the structure of which can be captured in the following way:

(i)



But if we add a few more adjuncts to it the VP will be expanded. Consider the following sentence:

(i) (a) John died peacefully in his village home in Kerala in May.



Before looking into the structure of the VP in some detail, let us look into the deep structure configuration of the VG first.

The VG is the verbal group. We call it a group because it may contain a number of auxiliary elements other than the main verb. The auxiliary verbs in English occur in the verbal group in a complex but systematic way. Consider the following structures:

(ii) They **eat** onions.

(iii) They **can eat** onions.

(iv) They **have eaten** onions.

(v) They **are eating** onions.

If you look into the verbal groups in these sentences you will easily identify 'eat' as the main verb in each of them. In (ii) **eat** is the verbal unit having only the main verb **eat**, in the next, **can eat** consists of the **modal auxiliary can** and the main verb, in (iv) **have** is the auxiliary which marks the **perfective** along with the past participle **-en** attached to the main verb **eat** and in (v) the auxiliary is the **progressive be** along with the present participle **-ing** attached to **eat**.

But in all these sentences Tense is also a very important element of the VG. It

is marked in the VG; and without it we cannot have a VG; it is an obligatory element in the VG, and therefore in the VP and, in the sentence. The point we are trying to make we cannot have a sentence without Tense.

In (ii) Tense Present is marked on the main verb **eat** and because of the English Subject-Verb agreement rule it has no phonological realization (you remember zero affixation?). In (iii) Tense is marked on the modal **can** (and you know that the modals are not inflected in Present tense form). In (iv) Tense is marked on **have** which is the **perfective** (auxiliary) and in (v) Tense is marked on **be** which is the **progressive** (auxiliary) and here the realization is in the form of **are**.

All these show that Tense is marked on the first element in the VG. See the following VG structures:

- (vi) He **writes** : He **wrote**.
- (vii) He **can write** : He **could write**.
- (viii) He **has written** : He **had written**.
- (ix) He **is writing** : He **was writing**.
- (x) He **could have written**.
- (xi) He **could have been writing**.
- (xii) He **had been writing**.

As Tense is marked on the first element in the VG, in interrogative sentences the tense carrying element undergoes **Inversion**. (Inversion means the tense carrying element is shifted to the front across the subject NP.) For example, see the structures of the interrogative counterparts of these sentences.

- (vii) (a) Can he write?
- (viii) (a) Has he written?
- (ix) (a) Is he writing?
- (x) (a) Could he have written?
- (xi) (a) Could he have been writing?
- (xii) (a) Had he been writing?

(Some of these sentences you may not use in real contexts, but these are the appropriate grammatical forms for the inversion in these sentences.)

It means, therefore, that the inversion rule operates very systematically in English in structures where we have one or more auxiliaries because the inversion process involves the first auxiliary element: as it needs the Tense to be inverted. But what about sentence (vi) where there is no auxiliary and the Tense is marked on the main verb **write**? Will the main verb along with the Tense be inverted?

* (vi) (a) Writes he?

We know this is not acceptable in English today though it was an acceptable form in Shakespeare's time: "*Like you the play?"

He writes → TPres he write → do + TPres write
 TPres Does

VG
Aux V
|
Tense

Aux → Tense – (Modal) – (Perf) – (Prog)

- ```

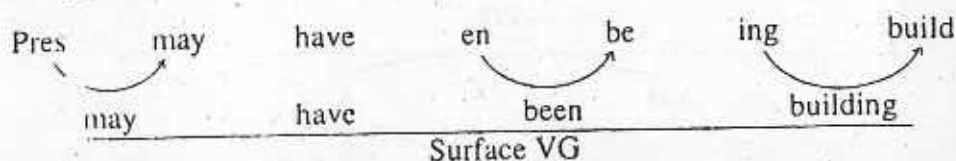
graph TD
 S --> NP1[NP]
 S --> VP[VP]
 NP1 --> N1[N]
 N1 --> He[He]
 VP --> VG[VG]
 VP --> NP2[NP]
 VG --> Aux[Aux]
 VG --> V[V]
 Aux --> T[T]
 Aux --> M[M]
 Aux --> Perf[Perf]
 Aux --> Prog[Prog]
 T --> Pres[Pres]
 M --> may[may]
 Perf --> have[have]
 Perf --> en[en]
 Prog --> be[be]
 Prog --> ing[ing]
 V --> build[build]
 NP2 --> Det[Det]
 NP2 --> N2[N]
 Det --> Art[Art]
 Art --> a[a]
 N2 --> house[house]

```

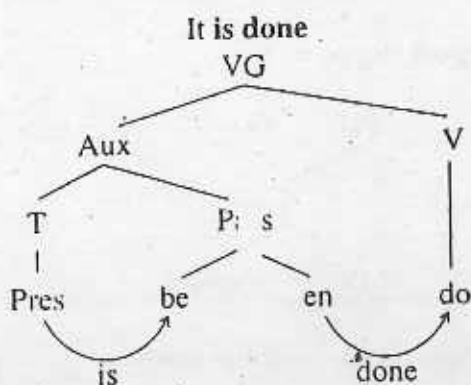
74



In the derivation from the deep to the surface structure the affixes will be attached to their right hand side elements (stems/roots) :



When a passive is introduced in the structure we have the passive as another auxiliary element whose structural configuration is **be -en** :

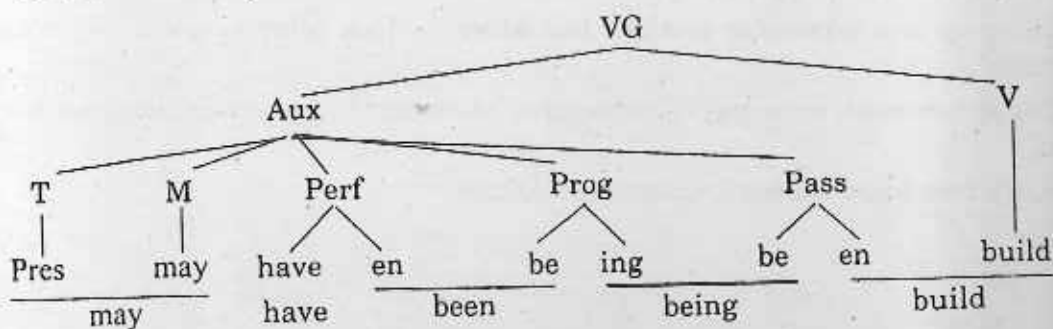


The fullest expansion of the auxiliary thus, would be

Aux → Tense – Modal – Perf – Prog – Pass

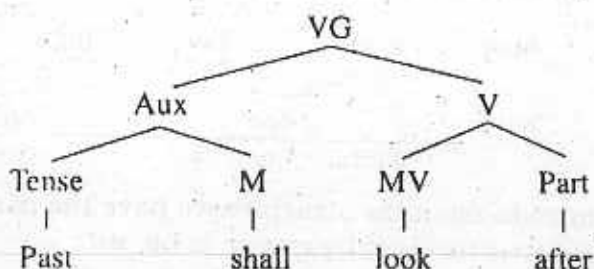
Now look at the following sentence:

2. The house **may have been being built**.

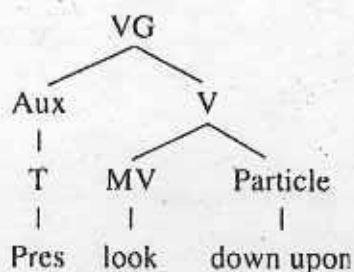


The verbal in the VG can also have element(s) other than the main verb. This happens in the case of the **phrasal verbs** which the traditional grammars refer to as the **group verbs**. In a phrasal verb we have the **main verb** and a **particle**. And the meaning of the phrasal verb may not necessarily be derived from the meanings of the main verb and the particle. For example, **look after** is a phrasal verb but its meaning cannot be derived from the meaning of **look** plus the meaning of **after**.

3. You **should look after** your parents.



4. **Don't look down upon** the poor.



Particles can be separable or non-separable in their surface structure forms. But in their deep structure representation we will have to capture them along with the main verb.

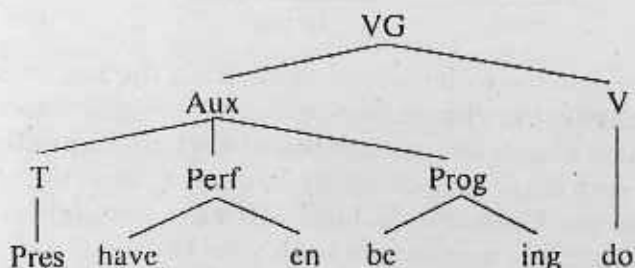
5. **Look up** the word in the dictionary.

or **Look** the word **up** in the dictionary.

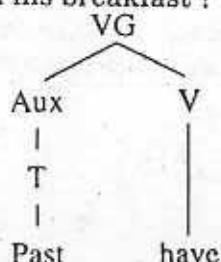
Here **up** is a separable particle. But **after** in 'look after' is a non-separable particle.

Let us now work out some VG structures following the framework we have been using:

6. He **has been doing** it since his childhood.



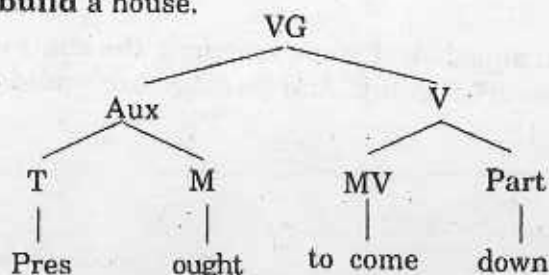
7. Did he **have** tea with his breakfast ?



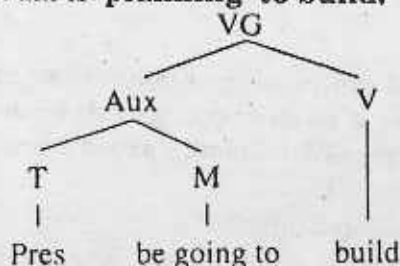
('do' is not shown here as it is not a lexical verb, but only a 'dummy' for carrying tense after inversion.)

8. Prices **ought to come down** now.

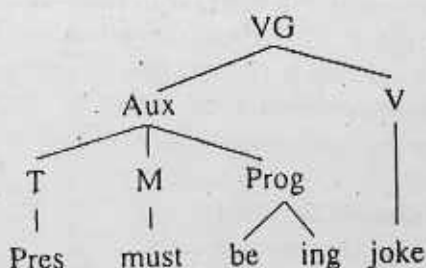
9. He's **going to build** a house.



Here **be going to** is treated as a modal as **go** here is not a lexical verb and the meaning of the modal is 'planning' to build.



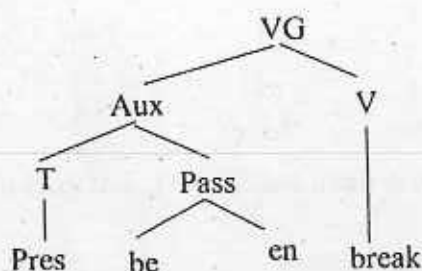
10. You **must be joking**.



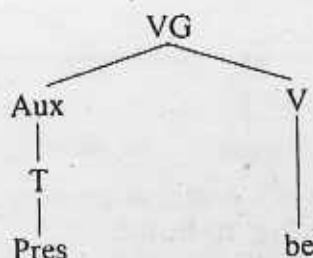
Sometimes the passive structure of a verb might be understood differently as verb **be** + Past participle adjective. In such cases we might get ambiguous structures.

11. The chair is broken.

If we understand it as a passive sentence the VG would be **is broken** for which the structure is (Here the meaning of the sentence is the chair is broken by someone).



But if 'broken' is an adjective of state, meaning 'the chair is in a broken state', we have only **is** as the verbal group. And its structure would be



12. They must be married.

Is also ambiguous in the sense of compulsion or obligation, must will receive a strong accent and the VG will have a passive configuration with **marry** as the main verb. But in the sense of a logical conclusion, **must be** will be the VG and **married** will be an Adj coming from VP.

Here is a list of important modals in English:

shall, will, may, can, must, have to be, going to, ought to, used to, need/need to, dare, let, let's, etc. Some linguists treat **be to** also as a modal (as in 'I am to be there now').

One more important aspect of the modals is that their present tense and past tense forms are semantically very different in most cases. With the change of Tense the modality changes and very rarely the change of Tense has a change in the time reference. Secondly, modals express a wide range of varying meanings. Examine the meanings of the following sentences with reference to the modal (the same modal):

13. It **will** rain today. (simple futurity)
14. Pigs **will** eat anything. (empty use)
15. She **will** sit there for hours doing nothing. (habitual/characteristic)
16. Examiners **will** please collect their remuneration. (request)
17. He **will** leave today. (insistence, with a strong accent on it)

### 3.8.7 REVIEW QUESTION 6 :

Analyse the structure of the verbal groups in the following passages:

- (i) Publicity spoils the talent of the players who consider themselves much stronger than what they actually are. So our players do not reach the pinnacle, as they should be. They would have reached it had they been in the western parts of the world.
- (ii) I have been learning to walk. It is not the ordinary walk that every child does.  
What I'm learning is to walk my way to health. I decided to walk.

### REVIEW QUESTION 7 :

Analyse the verbal groups in the following sentences:

- 1. Holders of complimentary tickets will not have to be kept waiting.
- 2. The main force of the enemy seemed to be withdrawing.
- 3. People from all parts of the country were expected to attend the funeral.
- 4. The cargo in the ship's hold went on burning.
- 5. Those interested ought not to attend the meeting.
- 6. We were looking forward to the party so eagerly.
- 7. He arranged with John for Mary to come at once.
- 8. He was reminded of the agreement.
- 9. Good use has been made of the house.
- 10. The building was not being built at that time.
- 11. The army was strongly opposed to the new system.
- 12. All countries might soon be clamouring for such a leader.
- 13. Workers will have to fight for their rights.
- 14. Let's do it then.
- 15. Don't get involved in it.

## 3.9 STRUCTURE OF THE SENTENCE

Now that we have looked into the structure of some major constituents of a sentential configuration, let us take into consideration the structural configuration of the 'sentence'. First, we will look into the interrelation between the constituents of the sentence as they are intuitively understood and interpreted by the native speakers (i.e. we will capture their hierarchical and linear interrelations at the level of the structure with the help of tree diagrams) and then try to examine how this structure string is mapped on to its corresponding surface structure by the application of Transformational rules. And this we will do within the framework of the standard theory or more precisely, the Chomskyan model proposed in 1965 in his **Aspects**.

In 1965 Chomsky moved away from his earlier model of 1957 which was a toy model to substantiate his argument in favour of a transformational generative model of grammar. In 1965 he had a 'generalized phrase marker' which explained



and improved on many of his earlier assumptions. It tries to show the sentential configuration as it is interpreted by the native speakers. For example, if a sentence has two meanings, the framework will give us two different deep structure phrase markers to capture the two meanings and then will show how two different sets of transformations will apply on these two phrase markers to arrive at the same surface sentence. In other words it will capture and resolve ambiguity or many other kinds of structural complexity. Let us examine the following to explicate our point:

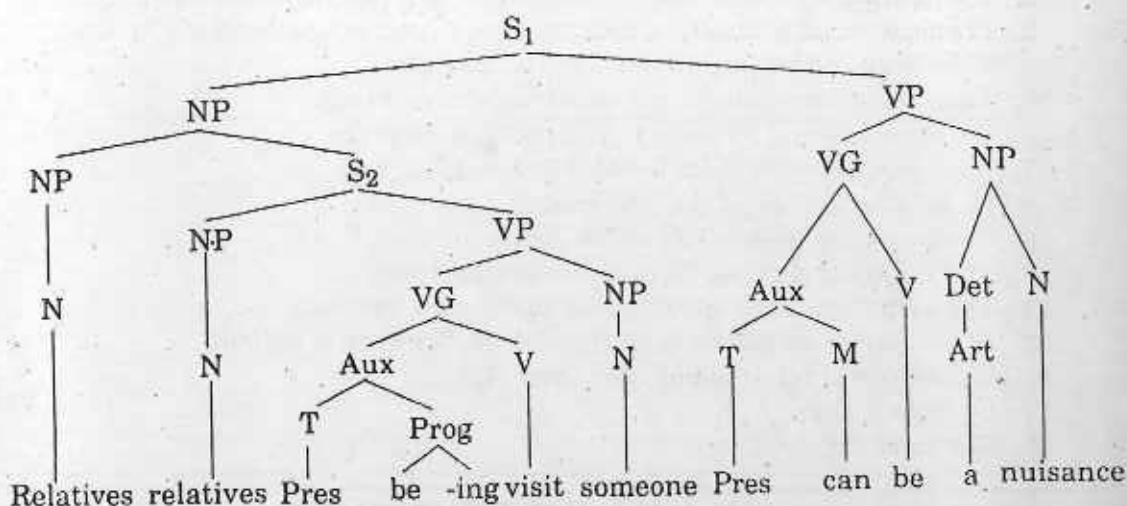
1. Visiting relatives can be a nuisance.

This is an ambiguous sentence which has two different meanings.

Meaning<sub>1</sub> (the) visiting relatives can be a nuisance.

Meaning<sub>2</sub> Visiting (the) relatives can be a nuisance.

These two meanings are derived from two different ways of understanding the structure. For Meaning<sub>1</sub> the deep structure would be the following:



On this deep structure the T-rules apply in the following way to generate the surface sentence – 'Visiting relatives can be a nuisance'.

D. Structure: Relatives (relatives Pres being visit someone) Pres can be a nuisance

1. Pronoun Substitution → Relatives (who Pres being visit someone) Pres can be a nuisance.

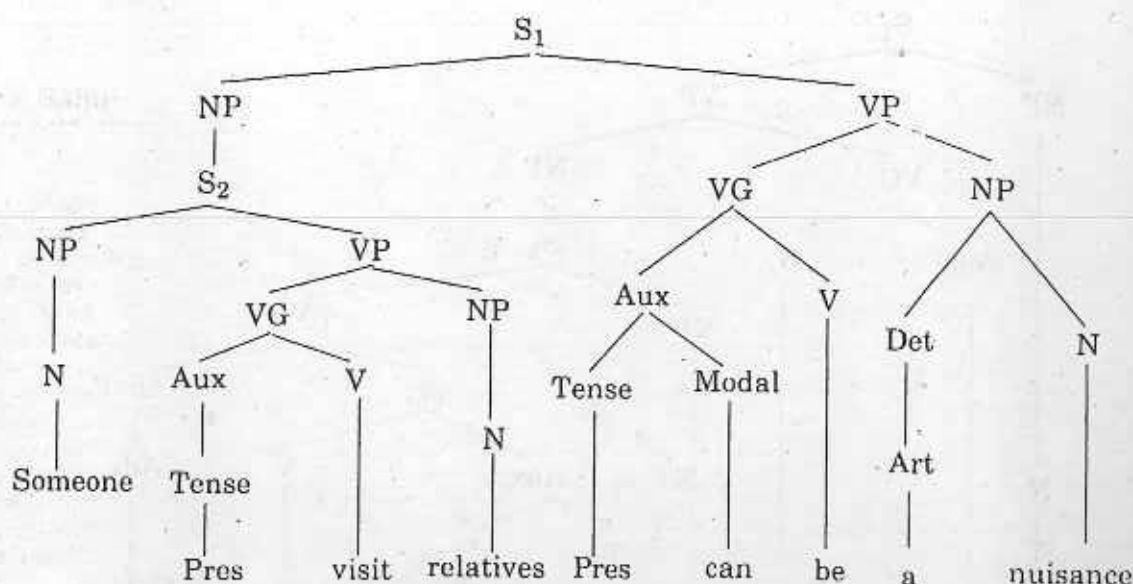
2. Rel. Pronoun + **be** deletion → relatives (-ing visit someone) Pres can be a nuisance

3. **Someone** deletion → Relatives (-ing visit) Pres can be a nuisance.

4. Rel. Cl. (Adjective) Fronting → (-ing visit) relatives can be a nuisance

5. Affix switch →  $\frac{\text{visit-ing}}{\text{visiting}}$  relatives  $\frac{\text{can - Pres}}{\text{can}}$  be a nuisance.

On the other hand, Meaning<sub>2</sub>) can be derived from the following deep structure of the same sentence:



On this deep structure the following T-rules apply to derive the surface sentence:  
 Deep Str : (Someone Pres visit relatives) Pres can be a nuisance.

TR<sub>1</sub> Complementiser Placement (Poss-ing) → (someone-poss ing visit relatives)  
 Pres can be a nuisance.

TR<sub>2</sub> Someone (+ Poss) deletion → (ing visit relatives) Pres can be a nuisance

TR<sub>3</sub> Affix switch →  $\frac{\text{visit -ing}}{\text{visiting}}$  relatives  $\frac{\text{can - pres}}{\text{can}}$  be a nuisance

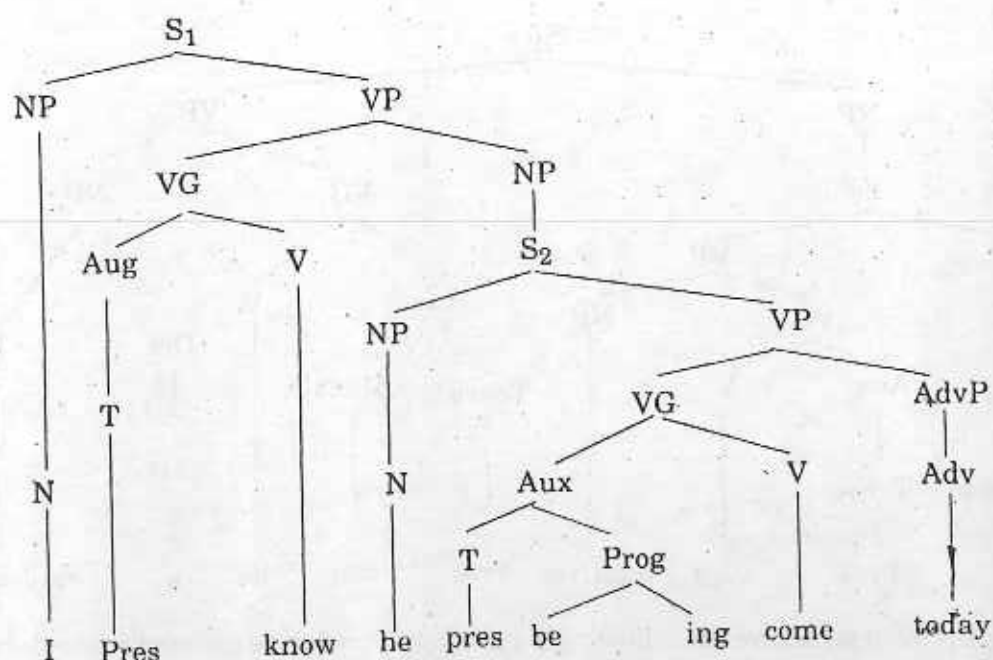
Notice that in the deep structure for Meaning<sub>1</sub>, we have a relative clause configuration in which **relatives** is the subject NP for the verb **visit** whereas in the structure for M<sub>2</sub> we find a complement clause configuration in which **relatives** is the object NP for the verb **visit**. This explains the ambiguity. And after the ambiguity is captured at the deep structure level the application of the Transformational rules (which are different) ultimately map two different deep structures on to the same surface sentence 'Visiting relatives can be a nuisance.'

This model therefore, becomes an 'externalization' of a native speaker's 'competence'. In other words, the grammar structurally interprets the syntactic interrelations the way the native speaker does it.

Here are some examples worked out for you to look into the deep structures of sentences.

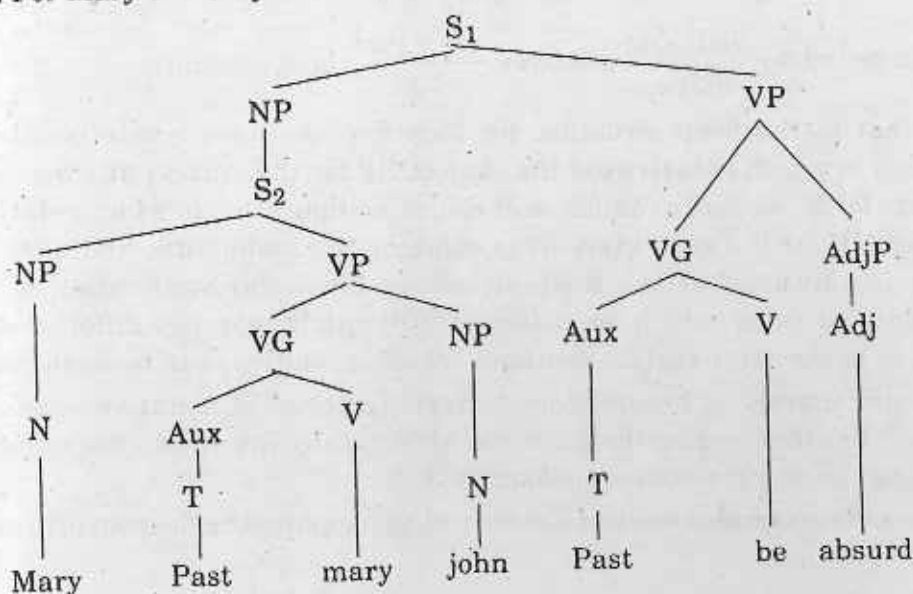
(i) Complement clauses:

1. I know that he is coming today.



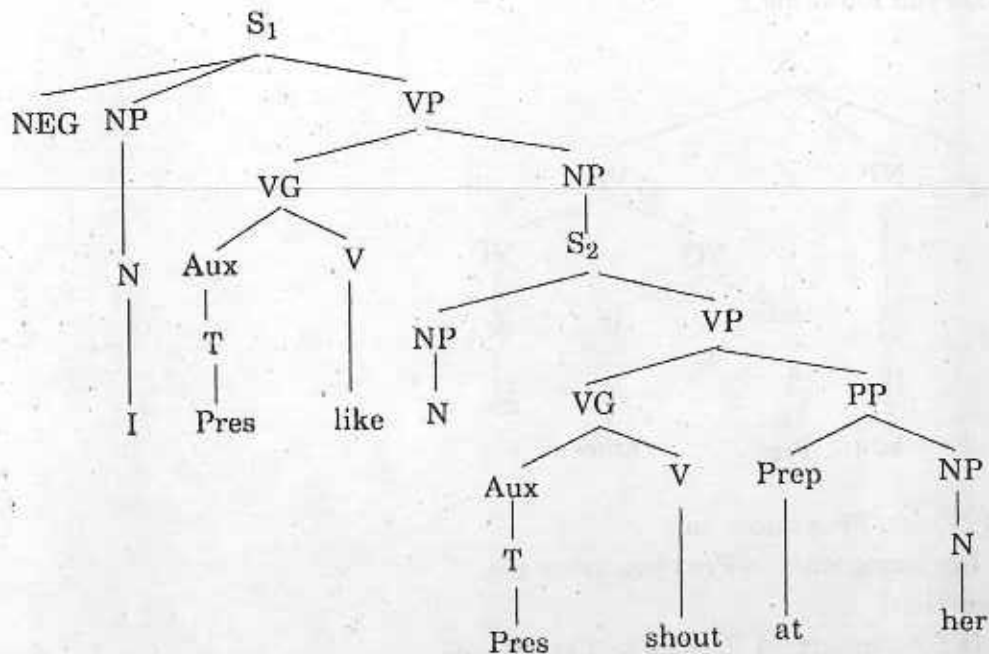
On the deep structure complementiser placement rule will place **that** complementiser before the complement clause ( $S_2$ ) and then the Affix switch rule will apply.

2. For Mary to marry John was absurd.



On this deep structure phrase marker complementiser placement rule will place for ... to complementiser in the p.m. and then the affix switch rule will apply.

3. I don't like shouting at her.

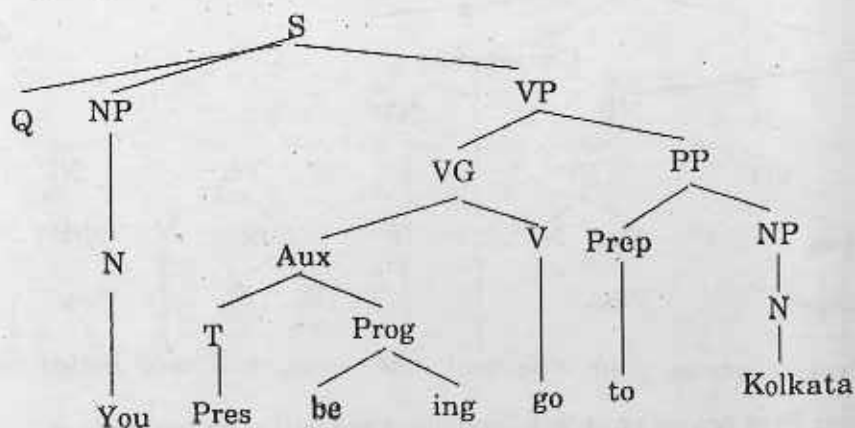


Neg I Pres like (I Pres shout at her)

On this deep structure the complementiser **Pres ...ing** will be placed in the S<sub>2</sub> and other T-rules including rules of negation will apply to derive the surface sentence.

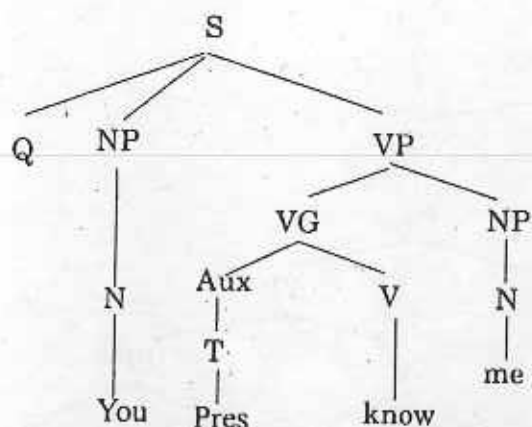
(ii) Interrogative structures:

4. Are you going to Kolkata ?



Here the T-rules for interrogation will apply first which will invert **Tense Pres** along with the Aux **be** across the object NP **you**. And then the Affix switch rule will apply to derive the surface form of the sentence.

5. Do you know me ?



PM : Q you Pres know me

TR I Interrogative → Pres you know me.

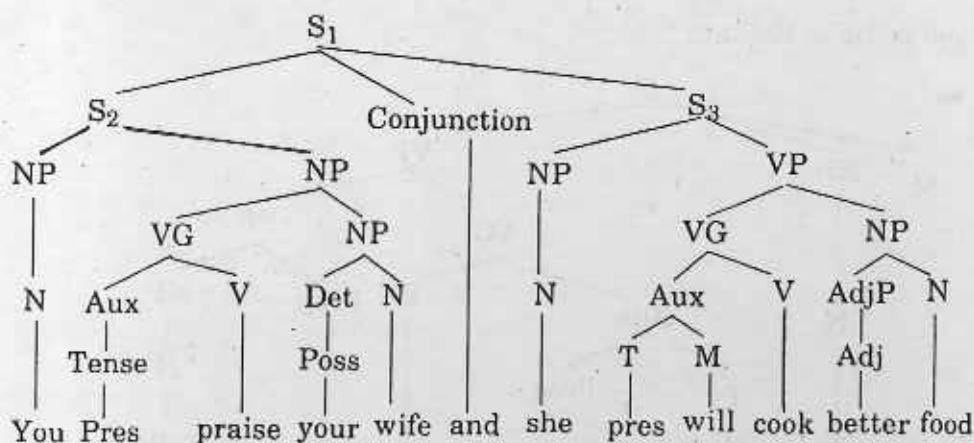
(Inversion)

TR II Do-support → Pres do you know me.

TR III Affix switch →  $\begin{matrix} \text{do} - \text{Pres} \\ \text{do} \end{matrix}$  you know me.

(iii) The structure of co-ordination:

6. Praise your wife and she will cook better food.



PM : you Pres praise your wife and she Pres will cook better food



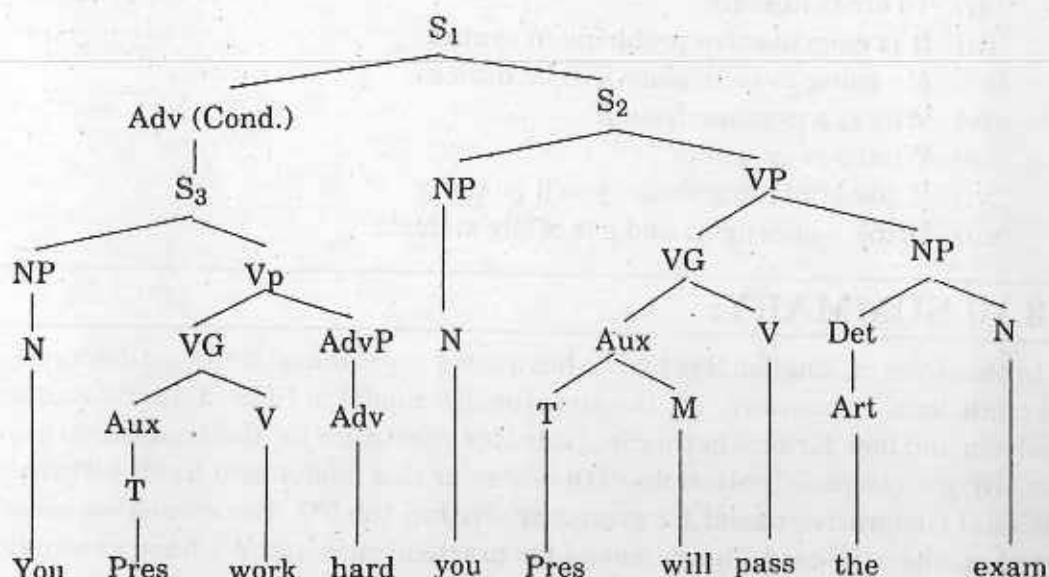
# TR I

Pronoun del → Pres praise your wife and she Pres will cook better food

Affix switch → praise – Pres your wife and she will – Pres cook better food  
praise will

(iii) Complex sentence with adverbial clause:

7. If you work hard you will pass the examination.



A T-rule will place the conditional marker *if* at the beginning of the adverbial clause ( $S_3$ ) and then the Affix switch rule will apply to generate the surface sentence.

In the 1965 model, Chomsky gave us a detailed description of the base component with the introduction of a number of new sets of rules, like **Strict Subcategorization rules** which will apply after the PS rules (PS rules have also been modified now), **Selectional Restriction rules** and **Lexical insertion rules**. These rules he had to postulate in view of the emerging needs for a more and more adequate and sophisticated model of linguistic description. As a result, the grammar became more and more complex. This process of modification continued through the sixties, seventies, eighties and nineties.

As we said earlier, the history of any science is a history of successive modifications. And linguistics is no exception. Transformational theory in the 1990s has moved far ahead of the standard theory formulation of the 1960s. But, for an introductory course on modern syntax this standard theory framework is very relevant and useful. This gives you the insight for looking into sentence structures in a way which is never found in the earlier models. As students of English syntax

you now have the awareness about the 'nuts and bolts' of the language. After this introductory course is completed you will learn more and more about the later developments in the field within the Chomskyan paradigm.

### 3.9.1 REVIEW QUESTION 8 :

Draw deep structure phrase makers for the following:

- (i) To err is human.
- (ii) It is easy to solve problems in syntax.
- (iii) My going to your place will be useless.
- (iv) Who is a genuine friend?
- (v) What's your name?
- (vi) If you study linguistics you'll go crazy.
- (vii) Drink wet cement and get really stoned.

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### 3.10 SUMMARY:

In this Unit on English Syntax we have tried to examine (i) the inadequacies of the traditional framework, (ii) the structuralist model of Immediate Constituent Analysis and how far or whether it is a better substitute for the traditional grammar, (iii) the intrinsic limitations of the structuralist model, and (iv) the Transformational Generative model for grammar. Within the TG framework we concentrated on the Standard Theory model for practical reasons. We have shown how this model operates in capturing deep structure configurations of sentences and then interrelations with their surface counterparts.

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### 3.11 RECOMMENDED READING:

1. Chomsky, N. (1957) : *Syntactic Structures*, Mouton and Co., The Hague Paris.
2. Chomsky, N. (1965) : *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.
3. Verma S. K. and N. Krishnaswamy (1989) : *Modern Linguistics*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

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## UNIT 4 □ IMPLICATIONS FOR ELT

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### Structure

#### 4.0 Introduction

#### 4.1 The Teaching of Grammar

#### 4.2 Three definitions of Grammar

##### 4.2.1 Learning Grammar

##### 4.2.2 Consciousness-raising

##### 4.2.3 C-R as an aid to learning

##### 4.2.4 The rationale for CR

#### 4.3 Methodology

#### 4.4 Underlying principles of Teaching Grammar

#### 4.5. Developing Grammar Through Language Skills :

##### 4.5.1 Overt and covert grammar teaching and writing

#### 4.6 Let us sum up

#### 4.7 References

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### 4.0 INTRODUCTION :

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You have been introduced to various concepts and operations of the grammar of the English language. This unit discusses the purposes and functions as well as the principles and methodology of teaching grammar.

Think of your school experience. What were your problems in learning grammar?

#### Review Activity 1 :

*List the problems you have faced in the learning of grammar.*

You might have recorded a response which is basically a list or lists of grammatical items which have proved to be difficult. You might have listed grammatical items also. These areas, however, have been discussed in the earlier units. In this unit you will need to go beyond the details of grammatical items to the principles of teaching and learning grammar. This unit discusses the *why* and *how* questions rather than the *what* question of teaching and learning grammar.

## 4.1 THE TEACHING OF GRAMMAR :

The teaching of any language involves the teaching of its grammar. The history of language teaching will show, however, that grammar is a term that has been understood and defined differently over time resulting in teaching methodologies that range from the teaching of rules as an end in itself to the opposite extreme position (held, for example, by many CLT adherents) of no grammar teaching at all. The CLT position on grammar is expressed in Newmark's comment :

"The teaching of grammar is neither necessary nor sufficient for learning a second language. That it is not necessary is proved by the first language learner's success without it. That it is not sufficient is proved by the second language learner's lack of success" (1971).

Today, Language Awareness (LA) studies advocate the conscious awareness of and sensitivity to the grammar of language and its role in human life. LA studies recognize the importance of the mother tongue, and its influence on the learning of a second language.

How can we define 'grammar'? According to McArthur (1883 : 37) "'Grammar' is not a precise term, in the way that 'phonology' or 'anatomy' or 'sodium chloride' may be considered precise terms... It behaves pretty much like the majority of words in a language; it has a core of generally agreed meaning, but is fuzzy around the edges." This means that the term 'grammar' can have several interpretations. Think of all the meanings the term 'grammar' has.

### Review Activity 2 :

*What does 'grammar' mean to you? Make a list of all the meanings.*

McArthur (1883; 38) gives a few sentences to show the range of meanings that the term 'grammar' can have. Work out the meaning of 'grammar' in each sentence.

1. Grammar is the rules people use when speaking or writing a language.
2. The boys went to the local grammar school.
3. That language was never written down, so it doesn't really have a grammar.
4. English is a language that doesn't have much grammar.
5. 'Grammar' and 'syntax' are really the same thing.
6. People who know a language work from grammars inside their heads.
7. The grammar of a language includes how to spell it and pronounce it.
8. Descriptive grammar is very different from prescriptive grammar.
9. Traditional grammar and modern theories like transformational generative grammar both seek to describe and explain a natural language.

Vygotsky (1972), the psychologist, has posited the interesting hypothesis that learning grammar and mathematics is important for the mental growth of a child.



The ancient Greeks and Romans too considered learning grammar a source of disciplining the mind. Therefore, teaching grammar means an awareness of rules and their use.

## 4.2 THREE DEFINITIONS OF GRAMMAR :

It is said that there are three kinds of grammar. This is a useful distinction for the teacher. The three kinds of grammar can be called G1, G2, G3.

To quote H N L Sastri (1987) :

1. Grammar is the *total mechanism* which a language possesses and through which its users are able to communicate with each other. (To avoid confusion, let us call this Grammar 1 or G1).

Every native speaker of a language, literate or illiterate, knows and controls his or her G1; without this, communication is not possible.

Each language possesses a distinctive G1, peculiar to itself – although some linguists maintain that the G1s of all languages, though superficially different from each other, are the same at some deeper level.

2. Grammar refers also to the formal *analysis* and description of the rules of the language. (Let us call this Grammar 2 or G2).

The illiterate native speaker of a language may know its G1 but not its G2. However, when s/he begins to think about language *consciously*, to wonder what should be said in a particular situation in order to get the 'message' across, s/he is involved in the G2 of the language; ("Yesterday I saw two mongooses – or should that be mongeese?").

A distinction is thus made between *formal grammar* (G2) which codifies and presents the 'facts about a language' and *functional grammar* (G1) which merely illustrates the correct use of the language.

3. Grammar refers also to the *rules for the correct use* of a language, which may be *prescribed* for its users. (Let us call this Grammar 3 or G3).

A "grammar" of the kind produced by Nesfield consists largely of rules which a learner is expected to master. But some modern grammars merely describe the facts of the language, instead of prescribing rules. This leads us to distinguish between a *descriptive* and a *prescriptive* grammar; between G2 and G3. The linguist is concerned only with G2 whereas the language teacher may be more concerned with G3.

Obviously, each language has rules, which permit even the illiterate native speaker to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable sentences ("No, not 'I wants a piece of bread' but 'I want ...'"). These rules are present in the G1 of the language, and a G2 should describe or state them. But from



time to time these rules may change; there is nothing inevitable or 'natural' about them; they are merely conventions.

Thus, there may be certain changes in G1 conventions which become totally acceptable (e.g., "*It's me*"), some that are only marginally acceptable to some speakers (e.g., "*Das wants Vikram and I to see him tomorrow*") and some that remain unacceptable to everyone (e.g., "*One of my friends work in Wipro*"). A good G2 should take note of all this, but a rigid G3 (such as Nesfield's) would reject all the changes.

[End of Extract]

### Review Activity 3 :

*Which grammar do you think the teacher is expected to teach — G1, G2 or G3?*

#### 4.2.1 LEARNING GRAMMAR

Once again, let us read what H N L Sastri (1987) says :

Every learner of English must ultimately learn the G1 of English, since this is what enables him/her to *use* the language.

As for the teachers no matter what one is teaching in the English class, if s/he is using the language correctly and making his/her students use it correctly, s/he is contributing to the learning of G1. The professor of poetry is also teaching G1, though s/he may not realize that s/he is teaching *grammar*.

What the 'grammar lesson' teaches, however, is the G2 or the G3 of English. But does the teaching of G2 or G3 help the student in learning G1?

The Indian situation seems to provide a ready answer to that question. Many of our students know a lot of G2 or G3 (this, at least, is what their marks in the school examinations indicate), but they can neither speak nor write correctly; their G1 is poor.

On the other hand, a student can certainly be made proficient in G1 without any exposure to G2 or G3 – this is what happens in the case of native speakers, and could happen with a student who is able to learn in the same way as a native speaker – that is through constant "exposure" to the language. This is what we find in the case of students of the best English medium schools in our own country.

If the teaching of G2 (or G3) does not ensure the learning of G1, why is it taught?

Partly, this is a hangover from the scholarly tradition which emphasized the study of grammar (G2) as a mental discipline; it is also partially due to a failure to distinguish between G1 and G2.

It would not be true to think that all teachers are happy about this. In fact, the reaction against the teaching of G2 and G3 has gone to the other extreme; in many cases teachers are warned that they should "teach the language not *about* the language."

This new approach emphasizes, as we have already seen, the practice of language in meaningful situations: oral drilling, pattern-practice, substitution exercises, etc. The student is systematically exposed to G1 (Functional Grammar) by the teacher, and the learner absorbs as much of it as s/he can.

At the initial stages of learning, there is no attempt to make the student think *consciously* about language or to provide explanations of any kind. Formal grammar (G2) is rigorously excluded, as it is believed that explanations will only confuse the young learner who does not possess the maturity to benefit from them.

Now, let us consider: the concept of Consciousness Raising.

#### 4.2.2 CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING :

There is a general consensus among learning theorists, educational psychologists, and language-teaching professionals that the learning of *anything* does not occur in a vacuum. That is, successful learning of whatever kind comes about only when what is to be learned can be meaningfully related to something that is already known. Learning, in other words, must take place within some kind of familiar context or framework. The natural question to raise, then, is what are such 'frameworks'—and the ones familiar to the learner—we might identify for the learning of second-language grammar. If we interpret 'familiar to the learner' in the broadest possible sense, then certainly we must include here what every language learner knows unconsciously — namely, the language universals.

Hitherto, some teachers have been very emphatic about one thing: not even the best G2 can really ensure that the student learns G1. The answer is to provide more and more practice, without wasting time over formalizations.

But it is unrealistic to hope that the Indian learner can get enough practice in the use of English G1 to be able to *absorb* it, as a native speaker does. There isn't enough English around us for this to happen.

The teacher will have to compensate for the lack of available practice, and provide a short-cut to the learning process. This is where an insightful process can help. This is called:

##### ● Grammatical consciousness-raising

To quote Rutherford (1987)

In what way, we are entitled to ask, would grammatical consciousness-raising (C-R) fit into this roughly drawn, very general picture of language learning? We must first narrow the scope of inquiry a bit by asking exactly what it is that grammatical C-R is expected to accomplish. The unstated assumption of many language-teaching professionals, past and present, has long been that an essential part of language teaching is 'the teaching of grammar' (included in what we here refer to in more general terms as 'grammatical consciousness-raising'). A look at

what has been written over the years on the subject tells us that this assumption usually has two parts to it :

1. a belief that language is built up out of sets of discrete entities and that language learning consists of the steady accumulation of such entities by the learner.
2. a belief that the essential characteristics of the entities (e.g. the 'rules' for their formation) can be directly imparted to the learner through teaching.

Grammar teaching then, for those who hold these beliefs, is looked upon as a sort of channel for direct passage to the learner's competence of discrete formal entities (and the simplified 'rules' that make these up) in the language he is trying to learn.

#### 4.2.3 C-R AS AN AID TO LEARNING :

First of all, it would be well for us to say that theories of grammar, though highly important to language pedagogy for other reasons, are not theories of language acquisition, and it is acquisition, after all, that grammatical C-R must be made to serve. Once we become accustomed to seeing grammatical theory in this light, then light is shed as well on the sensible role of grammatical C-R in pedagogy. The objects of grammatical focus and attention are there, as one well-known researcher, S. Pit Corder, has put it, 'to help the learner learn whatever it is he learns, but are not necessarily *what* he learns. Pedagogical descriptions are *aids* to learning, not the *object* of learning; so long as we keep that firmly in our minds we shall not get confused by the ambiguity of the expression "teaching grammar"' (Pit Corder 1973).

#### 4.2.4 THE RATIONALE FOR CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING :

Not all language-teaching professionals believe that grammatical consciousness-raising of some kind has an important place in the classroom, and some researchers hold that it has almost no place at all.

Yet the identification of crucial target-language data and the act of making them available to the learner in timely fashion (i.e. input) are still not enough for the design of a grammar-centred curriculum as we envisage it here. One must also be concerned with the choice of pedagogical instruments by which the data in question – already identified and appropriately available – may be absorbed by the learner (i.e. intake). These 'instruments' are really the means for raising learner consciousness, or what we referred to in Section 2.1.1. as 'modes of operation'. Here and there we have cited particular examples of such instruments (e.g. scrambled sentences, connecting lines for referential relations, propositional cluster, etc.), but we also want to take note of their broader characteristics.

The handiest frame of reference for conception of the instruments of C-R derives from what would have to be their two extremes; natural appearance of a grammatical phenomenon in 'authentic' text on the one hand and its contextless explicit formulation on the other. Somewhere in between these poles would occur C-R in

which the grammatical phenomenon would simply be 'highlighted' or otherwise given prominence of some kind, the learner is expected to do no more than merely 'notice'. Much of the C-R activity however, asks that the learner not only 'notice' but also perform an operation of some kind. In other words, it is C-R activity that is task-oriented, where the learner is actively engaged in solving problems.

In addition to selection of the appropriate C-R instrument, one must also make decisions as to the proper *intensity* of exposure, i.e. how much attention, and for how long? There is a limit, however, to what may be specified in advance of the actual learning experience and the questions we have just raised have as much to do with methodology as with curriculum, although the distinction between the two is not always a sharp one. We will therefore offer a few comments here on methodology as it relates to a grammar-centred curriculum.

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### 4.3 METHODOLOGY :

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Though it may seem paradoxical, what is to be taught in the kind of grammar-centred approach we have been discussing is not grammar at all. If the learner is actually 'taught' anything, we would have to say that he is taught 'how to learn' or, better still, 'how to manage his own learning' (Allwright 1984a). Target-language grammar enters the learner's experience not as an objectified body of alien knowledge to be mastered or as obstacles to be overcome but rather as a network of systems in which the learner is already enmeshed, the full grammatical implications of which he alone has to work out on the basis of what he comes in contact with in interaction with what he himself contributes as an already accomplished language acquirer. Methodologically speaking, grammar in this sense is not so much 'in command of learning' as it is 'in the service of learning'.

Several other methodological conclusions follow from the pedagogical role we have chosen for grammar. Since no attempt is being made to force classroom learning procedures into 'lockstep' pattern, there should thus be no barrier to learners developing at a pace consistent with their own predilections for hypothesizing, projecting, generalizing, and reanalysing. One beneficial consequence of this is that if each learner is following his/her own individual learning schedule, learning has little chance of being competitive. To the extent that learners often learn from each other as much as from their teacher, learning will in fact be *co-operative*.

#### Review question I

- A. What is the distinction between rule-based teaching of grammar and Consciousness-raising?



## 4.4 UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING GRAMMAR :

Today, most of the principles of teaching grammar are derived from the CLT methodologies. We are teaching grammar for communication.

1. The first general principle for an effective methodology here is that grammar teaching should be done *in context* and in relation to language skills. Grammatical forms can be developed through use and analysis of texts, i.e. while reading, writing, listening and speaking. A variety of contexts presents a wide spectrum of meanings and structures.
2. An analysis of contextualized grammatical use can be described as an *inductive* form of teaching, where you move from examples or practice to rules. The extent of emphasis put on rules is of course dependent on the student's communicative needs, as well as on your perception of what language learning is. Giving labels to items should not be an end in itself, but it is useful for students to know basic terms like *verb*, *noun*, etc. The opposite method of teaching a rule first, and then following it up by examples will happen only if our objectives are to learn the forms of the language first rather than communication through a particular language. This, as we have repeatedly said, is not our primary objective today but it was so when language teaching used the grammar-translation method in the teaching of classical languages (Sanskrit, Latin and Greek).
3. The focus then is on meaning rather than on forms primarily. If meaning is interesting and continues to be so, then it is possible to start an acquisition of a grammar, similar to G1. This automatic learning could be "unconscious" in nature.

A corollary to this is that the conscious learning of rules, learnt contextually and with a secondary emphasis, will also take place. This is the most common kind of grammar intake that we have with the learning of the grammar of a second language and is useful for what Krashen (1981) calls the *monitoring* of language. A knowledge of rules does help second language learners to correct themselves. Indeed, self-correction that is immediate (as in speaking) and not so immediate (as in writing) is perhaps the purpose of learning a G3 type of grammar.

4. What is being referred to here is the *accuracy* factor in language use, which is discussed in CLT. The opposite end of this dichotomy is the *fluency* factor. Fluency, according to CLT methodology, is to be promoted before accuracy can be demanded. If accuracy or correctness is asked for in the initial stages



of the development of an L2 or indeed in the development of any writing or speaking activity, then the chances are that language will not develop, and that the student might even not be motivated to use the language at all.

### **Review question II**

What are the principles of teaching grammar ?

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## **4.5 DEVELOPING GRAMMAR THROUGH LANGUAGE SKILLS :**

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This section discusses how grammar can be developed through the practice of the language skills.

### **Activity D**

*How can grammar be developed in a functional way through language? Give your ideas briefly in the space provided below :*

Reading : \_\_\_\_\_

Writing : \_\_\_\_\_

Listening : \_\_\_\_\_

Speaking : \_\_\_\_\_

### **Discussion :**

**Reading:** While reading, the students can be asked to do tasks and answer questions in context. They can be asked to analyse language forms.

**Writing:** Writing is an activity where much time can be spent on real-life, contextualized grammar learning particularly since writing does give time for the editing of texts.

**Listening:** Like reading, listening too, can be used to encourage the analysis of grammar in context. Tenses could be examined, for example, to see how meanings change. Reported speech could be used for giving and taking messages, etc.

**Speaking:** Like writing, speaking too does encourage self-monitoring. However, unlike writing, the skill of speaking demands quick self-monitoring. There is very

little time for thinking about the rules of grammar. That is why the notion of fluency is particularly relevant here.

### Review question III

Which skill is best for promoting the teaching and learning of grammar? Why?

## 4.5.1 OVERT AND COVERT GRAMMAR TEACHING AND WRITING :

Editing is the last stage in the process of writing. This stage involves the checking of grammar, spelling and punctuation. This is the stage of focussing on the accuracy of language.

Focussing on the accuracy stage of reformulating texts and discourse is very important while writing. Read this extract from H N L Sastri (1987). It gives us insights into practical techniques for teaching grammar.

The teacher can select passages from the text which can be analysed to illustrate certain grammatical principles. He has to decide in advance which part of the grammar he wishes to discuss, and usually the basis for this is the known deficiencies of the students (revealed perhaps, by error-analyses). Let us suppose the teacher wishes to go over the grammar of the tense system in English, which is known to cause difficulties to the student. The problems, for example, may be:

- i. Over-use of the present continuous tense (even in places where the simple present would be more appropriate). This may be due to interference from the mother tongue, or bad teaching; sometimes the continuous tense is over-taught in school as it seems to be more useful for 'situational' teaching.
- ii. Confusion between the simple past and the present perfect and the simple past and the past perfect.
- iii. Confusion between different forms of expressing futurity (will/shall, going to, etc.).

The students do not need an *exhaustive* description of the tense system of English: they need to know only the relevant facts, to help remove the confusions they might have. Grammatical explanation should be accompanied by illustrations, and these should be from a contextualized passage. So the teacher must find a passage, preferably from the text, which brings out the contrastive use of (for example) the Simple Present and the Continuous – ("I generally walk home from college but now I am driving home"), the Present Perfect, the Simple Past etc.

Grammatical patterns should be introduced, if possible, *in contrast with other patterns*, rather than in isolation. It may be difficult to find a text suitable for illustrating all the uses, especially the contrastive uses, of a grammatical item, but the teacher should be able to adapt, re-write, or even compose a suitable passage.

After this is given to the students the teacher must make sure that it is totally comprehensible to them: he may, if necessary, use the passage for comprehension before he exploits it for grammar. The important thing is to make the student read the text carefully: in this respect the grammar lesson is no different from any other.

The teacher then draws attention to each pattern that he has already selected, explaining the principle(s) involved, in not too technical language. (There is no need to fight shy of 'labels' such as *noun*, *subject* etc. If these terms are introduced meaningfully, they are generally acceptable; and the advantage is that they permit the teacher to explain things more precisely.)

There may be some advantage, in some situations, in using the mother tongue to explain concepts which are difficult or abstract. The mother tongue must, however, be limited to explanations *offered by the teacher*. The actual practice of language items must be in English.

After the grammatical principles have been explained and illustrated, the learning must be reinforced through exercises (introduced in contextualized passages as well as in isolated sentences, for greater 'sharpness'). The student may also be invited to construct a passage, similar to the one used for explaining the grammar. Finally, the lesson should be recapitulated for the main grammatical points.

As we have seen already, the major reason for introducing grammar overtly (at the college level) is to provide remediation: there is not much 'new' grammar to be taught, and mere 'consolidation' (by practice) of language items already learnt in school is likely to be harmful rather than beneficial.

[End of extract]

It is not just the prose lesson and writing skills that can be used to teach grammar – we can develop grammar through role play, language games, etc. This will be discussed in your contact programme.

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## 4.6 LET US SUM UP :

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We will depart from the customary narrative here and attempt a different kind of wrap-up for important aspects of the grammar-driven pedagogical programme outlined so far. Following, then, is the sketch of such a programme (which we again label 'organic'), whose attributes are (1) grouped according to 'objectives', 'curriculum', and 'methodology', and (2) contrasted with an idealized sketch of the more traditionally conceived ('mechanic') grammar-centred pedagogy:

*Two views of the grammar-centred pedagogical programme*

|              | <i>Mechanic</i>                                                                     | <i>Organic</i>                                                                  |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| OBJECTIVES : | Knowledge of language structure<br>Grammatical well-formedness<br>Grammar as an end | Knowledge of language system<br>Grammatical understanding<br>Grammar as a means |
| CURRICULUM : | Teacher organized<br>Structures                                                     | Teacher/learner organized<br>Operations                                         |

*Mechanic**Organic*

|              |                                          |                                               |
|--------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
|              | Linear                                   | Cyclic                                        |
|              | Exhaustive                               | Selective                                     |
|              | Uniqueness                               | Relationship                                  |
|              | Hierarchical                             | Holistic                                      |
|              | Accumulation                             | Metamorphosis                                 |
|              | Agglutination                            | Fusion                                        |
|              | Product-oriented                         | Process-oriented                              |
|              | Language/learner distance                | Language/learner proximity                    |
|              | Increasing complexity                    | Progressive reanalysis                        |
| METHODOLOGY: | Teach grammar                            | Teach learning                                |
|              | Transmission by teacher                  | Interpretation by learners and teacher        |
|              | C-R is an end (necessary and sufficient) | C-R is a means (necessary but not sufficient) |
|              | Memory                                   | Understanding                                 |
|              | Specific rules                           | General principles                            |
|              | Predictable, closed                      | Unpredictable, open                           |
|              | Objectification                          | Incorporation                                 |
|              | Competitive, divisive                    | Co-operative, supportive                      |
|              | Rule articulation                        | Operational experience                        |
|              | Group-focused                            | Individual-focused                            |
|              | Grammar as an obstacle                   | Grammar as a facilitator                      |
|              | Grammar in command                       | Grammar in service                            |
|              | Speeding up (time needed for production) | Slowing down (time needed for reflection)     |
|              | Cadential (lockstep learning)            | Chaotic (differential learning)               |

This unit looked at basic issues in teaching grammar. It discussed the principles of teaching grammar, as well as procedures that could be used in the classroom. Here is a review of some of the issues discussed.

G1. constitutes an intuitive knowledge of the language. It is the total mechanism which a language possesses and through which you communicate with each other. You "know" the rules because you use them -- but you may not be able to describe the rules or even pass an examination set on the rules of the language. Each language possesses a distinctive G1, peculiar to itself although some linguists maintain that though all G1s are different from one another they have a universal grammar or commonality between them.

G2. A second type of grammar is the grammar of linguists, which is the scientific study of languages. Such a grammar is based on descriptions of language that arise from a large data base or corpus of language. This kind of grammar can be described as knowledge about the language.



G3. This is the kind of grammar which focuses on the use of language. Pedagogic grammars are of this kind. Here rules and use are related.

● The principles of teaching grammar are :

1. Teaching in context and consciousness-raising
2. Inductive teaching
3. Meaning-focussed teaching
4. Fluency to be followed by accuracy.

● Perhaps writing is the best skill for promoting the learning of grammatical forms. There is enough time here for the writer/learner to monitor his/her knowledge of the grammar of the language being used. Writing also involves the coherence and cohesion of paragraphs which means that any grammar teaching is necessarily related to a context which is here the learner's own and therefore highly relevant. This is then related to learner needs.

● Which grammar is most appropriate for the classroom ?

Most often we are in the G3 type of formal grammar context, but our aim should be to refer to this in a communicative way so that our students are able to master forms in a way that is closely similar to the acquisition of G1 by the native speaker.

● The *demonstration of a skill enables the learner to learn*. It is this concept of 'skill' in relation to 'language learning' that is most compatible with a truly serious approach to grammatical consciousness-raising. Therefore it is not that learning grammar helps a student to demonstrate his skill but it is through exploitation of a skill that one learns grammar.

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## **UNIT 5 □ GENERAL PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY**

- 5.1 Objectives — An Introduction
- 5.2 The nature of the Spoken Language
- 5.3 Phonology and Phonetics
- 5.4 The Role of Sounds in Communication
  - 5.4.1 Exercise
- 5.5 Place of Phonetics in Communication
- 5.6 The Importance of Phonetics in Spoken Communication
  - 5.6.1 Exercise
- 5.7 Types of Sound Differences
- 5.8 Difficulties in Pronunciation
  - 5.8.1 Exercise
- 5.9 How to overcome the difficulties in Pronunciation
- 5.10 Types of Pronunciation
  - 5.10.1 Exercise

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### **5.1 OBJECTIVES — AN INTRODUCTION**

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In this unit we will be dealing with the study of speech sounds in a language. The study of speech sounds is referred to as Phonology. At first we ought to be able to distinguish between sounds that may be referred to as noise.

When you wake up early in the morning you can hear a number of sounds. Try to remember at least three such sounds that you hear every morning. (i) The sound of..... (ii) ..... (iii) ..... Are they all speech sound? Speech sounds are those that combine to form words and sentences which we use to communicate with others. Phonology teaches us correct pronunciation without which communication can very often breakdown.

Pronunciation is the use of a sound system in speaking and listening. The pronunciation of a language is made up of consonant and vowel sounds, stress, rhythm, intonation, junctures, and their sequences. Included in pronunciation are the phonemes, their allophones, and their phonemic features, the syllable patterns, sound clusters and phrase patterns permitted in the language.

The spoken language is more used than the written language. Children learn to speak the language by imitating our speech. So, we should try to draw their attention to correct pronunciation and for that we have to improve our own pronunciation.

There is not just one form of correct or standard English pronunciation. English is spoken differently in different countries. English is spoken as the first language in U K, the U S A, Canada, Australia and New Zealand; and as a second language in India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Nigeria, and in each of these countries, English is spoken differently. So, for the sake of convenience for the learners we have to select a model which will be easy and intelligible within India and abroad. One such variety of English is the Received Pronunciation (R.P) , spoken by educated British speakers in the south of England. In this unit we will use this variety of English (R.P). We wish to make you aware of certain important characteristics of R.P and also to help you to use them in your own speech. For this purpose we wish to describe this variety in some detail.

The unit begins with a general introduction on the importance of teaching pronunciation and then discusses how speech is produced. It also draws your attention to the fact that unlike in many Indian languages, there is no one-to-one correspondence between spelling and pronunciation. So the study of Phonology which will include the study of the segmental and the supra-segmental features of the language, has become a bare necessity for all language learners.

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## **5.2 THE NATURE OF THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE**

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When we speak, our spoken language consists of a succession of speech sounds that are produced with the help of the organs of speech.

Speech sounds are made voluntarily. They require that the organs of speech shall be moved in certain definite ways in order to produce the required language for communication.

The succession of sounds is composed of (i) speech sounds proper, and (ii) glides. The speaker has to acquire/learn articulatory features in order to make a speech sound, whereas as glides occur as the natural and inevitable result of pronouncing two speech-sounds one after the other. Most of the glides are inaudible or hardly audible even to the most practised ear.

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## 5.3 PHONOLOGY AND PHONETICS

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### What is Phonology?

Phonology is the branch of Linguistics which investigates the ways in which speech sounds are used systematically to form words and utterances. If we wish to understand **phonology** we must have a grasp of the basic concepts of **phonetics**, which is the study of the production of speech sounds by speakers, their perception by hearers and their acoustic properties. Most speakers of a language like English, who have not made any study of phonetics and phonology tend to think of the sounds of speech through the medium of the ordinary alphabet. In the English language, the spelling does not suggest the accurate pronunciation of words. People who have not studied phonetics can hardly describe the spoken language except in terms of the alphabet (i.e. consonant, vowel, syllable, which are often interpreted as graphological representation pertaining to the study of the written language).

Written English is often an inadequate and misleading representation of the spoken language of to-day. If we are to examine the essence of the English language, we must make our approach through the spoken rather than the written form. Our primary concern should be in the production, transmission and reception of the sounds of English – in other words, we have to learn the phonetics of the language. Once we abandon orthography, we will find that the analysis of the spoken form of English is by no means simple. Each of us uses an infinite number of speech sounds when we speak English. Two utterances by the same person of a particular word may show a marked difference in the quality of the sound, yet we can say that the same sound sequence has been repeated. For example, we may hear clear and considerable differences of quality in the vowel sound of 'love' as for instance in the London and Manchester pronunciation of the word. Or, for example, in India you can hear a clear difference of quality in the vowel of 'cot' in the U.P. and Bengal pronunciation of the word.

A language is a system of conventional signals used for communication by a

whole community. This pattern of conventions covers a system of significant sound units (the phonemes), the inflexion and arrangement of '**words**', and the association of meaning with words. An utterance, which is an act of speech, is a single concrete manifestation of the system at work.

## 5.4 THE ROLE OF SOUNDS IN COMMUNICATION

When a person wants to convey a message to another person, he can use a variety of means. He may use the written form and write it down on a piece of paper, wood, bone, clay, wax or stone and hand it over. He may transmit the message by using sign language (as deaf persons, mutes do), he may stand on one mountain range and wave or drape flags in a pre-arranged way to the recipient standing on another mountain range; or he may prefer to flash a mirror. All these are visual means. On the other hand, the message may be transmitted through sounds or audible means. For example, by fog-horn, morse-code, or drum-beat, or it may simply be spoken – i.e. transmitted by word of mouth.

Mostly all messages are spoken, i.e. transmitted by means of sound generated by some of the bodily organs available to every human being. The spoken word is the most frequent means of communication between people and by far the most important medium. But since other media are also available such as flags, drums, gestures, writing, etc. and since the same message may be passed on by any of these media, it would be wrong to argue that speech is at the centre of communication. The heart of the matter is the message itself which may be transmitted through various means.

It is therefore necessary to acknowledge the centrality of '**the message**' in order to be able to place phonetics – the study of the sounds of spoken language – in the context of linguistic studies generally. Phonetics is concerned with the human sounds by which '**the message**' is given an audible shape, the nature of those sounds, their combinations, and their functions in relation to the message.

### 5.4.1 EXERCISE

**Answer the following questions :**

(a) 'Speech sounds are made voluntarily' — Explain in your own words.

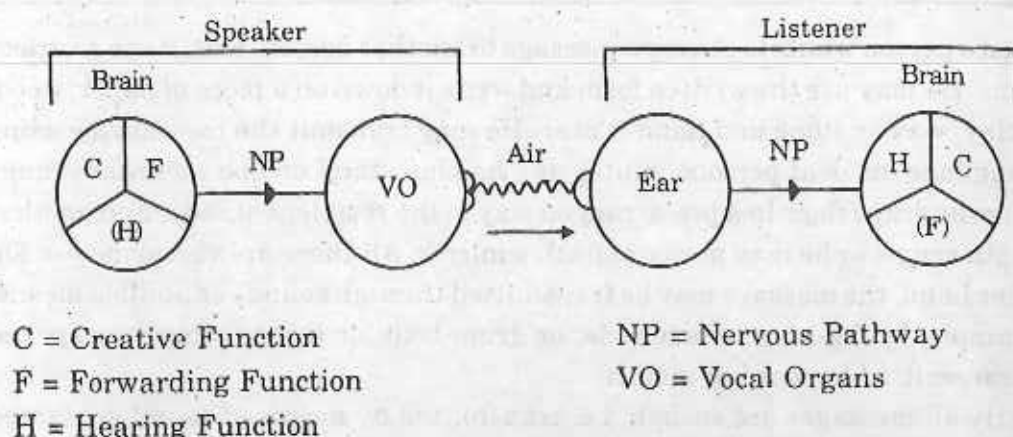
(b) In what way is spoken language more important than written language?

Write in a few sentences.



## 5.5 PLACE OF PHONETICS IN COMMUNICATION

The following diagram by J.D.O'Connor, in his book on 'Phonetics' will clarify our ideas about the place of phonetics in the communication process. It is a simple model of a single act of communication, i.e. the passing of one message from a **speaker** to a **listener**.



The act of communication, you will notice, starts in the brain of the speaker and we may think of the speaker's brain as having two distinct functions for our purpose: (i) a creative function, and (ii) a forwarding function.

(i) **Creative Function:** This is the central function and it is through this function that the message is conceived and formed. Stored in the brain, is a profound knowledge of the way in which the language operates. This knowledge is of many kinds, and all this is derived from our experience of using the language as both speaker and listener from our earliest childhood. We know the grammatical patterns of the language, the vocabulary items which can be used to fill out these patterns. We have at least some knowledge of dialect (i.e. variables of the same language other than our own). We know that the general probabilities of utterance are of one word or expression following another and so on which we are able to make use of when necessary. But it does not mean that each of us has exactly the same information stored away: almost certainly every individual's store is to a greater or lesser extent different from everyone else's. But if we are to communicate efficiently, there must be a sufficient stock of common information at our disposal.



There are **three** different phases of the creative function: (i) a need to communicate – this may be in response to some outside event or entirely to some inner thought process. Suppose you see your friend finish his first cup of tea at the tea-table and you wish to offer him a second cup. So, you initiate a message which will lead to that happening. Once you decide on a message, you then decide (ii) what medium to use – speech, writing, sign language, etc. This will often be determined by the circumstances of the case. (iii) Then, a decision has to be made as to the form of the message. Is it to be **imperative** (Have another cup) or should it be **interrogative** (Would you like another cup?). If imperative, then should it be 'Pass your cup' or 'Have some more?' and so on. We make these decisions of form very quickly and of course without consciously thinking of them at all, and the message is formed immediately.

The **forwarding function** of the brain now takes over.

#### (ii) **Forwarding function**

This is the function of the brain which is concerned with the controlling muscular movements which now send out patterned instructions in the form of nervous impulses along the nervous pathways connecting the brain to the muscles of the organs of speech (responsible for speech sounds), the lungs, the larynx, tongue, etc. These instructions call upon the muscles concerned to perform various delicate combinations and sequences of movement which will result in the '**right**' sounds being emitted in the '**right**' order.

#### **Vocal organs:**

At this stage the neurological activity which has been taking place in the brain and along the nervous pathways is transformed into muscular activity, that is, the lungs are contracted, the vocal cords vibrate, the tongue wags, the jaw goes up and down, the lips part or come together and so on. All these actions are very beautifully and accurately controlled – the co-ordination of movement required for the emission of speech is probably the greatest achievement of muscular skill. The result of these movements is to set the air in motion, from the lungs, which is acted upon, stopped, obstructed, released by the vocal organs so that it comes out from the mouth in a sequence of complex waves of pressure. Then a second transformation takes place from movement of muscles to movement of air. The movement of lung-

air is now transferred in the same form to the outer air and the waves of varying air-pressure spread out in every direction around us, gradually growing weaker as the distance increases and their original energy is absorbed. This moving air ultimately strikes on the 'ear' of the listener, if he is nearby.

**The Ear:** The ear-drum is extremely sensitive for the air-pressure waves to cause it to move in and out in a way closely related to the movement of the air itself. This further transformation – from air movement back to the organic movement of the ear-drum – is now followed by a final transformation, in the inner ear, of this organic movement back to neurological activity, which results in nerve impulses being sent along the nervous pathways connecting the ear to the listener's brain. The listener's brain also has two functions – a **hearing function** and again a **creative function**.

### **Hearing function:**

The impulses coming from the ear are accepted as sound sequences of constantly changing quality and characteristic length, pitch, loudness. The listener hears the message but does not understand it at once. This is something that happens to us when we hear a foreign language that we do not know. We hear the sounds but we do not receive the message. To understand the message, the listener has to interpret the sounds he hears in the light of the stored knowledge in his brain. He not only hears the sounds but recognizes them and matches them up with what he already knows about the language, and finally selects the most likely meaning of the message. This genuinely creative process is another part of the creative function of the brain.

### **Matching sound sequences with meaning**

The process of matching starts with the sounds themselves. If you hear a sound or a combination of sounds which your stored knowledge tells you is not permitted in the language, you at once reject the data and look around for something similar which is permitted.

For example, if you hear someone saying, 'He fell on the stveet', you have to reject the 'v' because you know from your experience that the consonant cluster **stv** does not exist in the English language at the beginning of words. You would either

replace it with 'r' which makes the sequence acceptable or you would ask for a repetition. No progress in speech can be made until and unless the brain has arrived at a satisfactory interpretation of the incoming sounds. We very often make mistakes in the match that we make; because we select the wrong English pronunciation, which we think could be possible. The same would be true if an English pronunciation of **'ballet dancer'** (where 't' is silent), is misinterpreted by an American listener as **'belly-dancer'**. Given an American pronunciation framework, **belly dancer** is the more likely solution.

The acceptability and non-acceptability of words or phrases could be at other levels like the grammatical level, vocabulary level or cultural levels as well. If we hear (or what we seem to hear) is: 'The man are shouting slogans', we can not accept it on the grammatical level, because it is not a permitted form. So, we reconstruct it as: 'The **men are** shouting slogans', or possibly, 'The man is shouting slogans', both being equally acceptable grammatically. It should be noted here that this is a grammatical decision and not a decision about sounds. The sound sequence represented by **'man are'** is perfectly acceptable, but not grammatically.

Similarly, matching at the level of vocabulary is independent both of sound and grammar. If we hear 'He swallowed it hook', we would reject it and try to reconstruct it because of our knowledge of what words are likely to go together, not for grammatical or phonetic reasons.

Even when we try to match at different levels within the language itself, you will find that there is still more to be done. If you hear, 'Come and see me at 4 o'clock', which could be an appointment on the same day, and the time at the moment of speaking is 4.30, the situation here does not match, so the utterance must therefore be rejected, because it is situationally not acceptable.

Finally, if the linguistically unexceptionable utterance, 'My wives told me about it', will be normally rejected, or questioned by others because of failure to match cultural expectations.

Therefore, the passing of a spoken message involves a great deal of activity beyond the production, transmission and reception of sound. The sound is not the message, but it is what gives the message shape in spoken communication, and because of this, it is important to study phonetics.

## 5.6 THE IMPORTANCE OF PHONETICS IN SPOKEN COMMUNICATION

In speech we rely very heavily upon **sound** to make plain the significant distinctions of meaning which can be made by the more central operations of grammar and vocabulary. A word, when it is pronounced, must have a particular sound-shape if it is to be recognized, just as it must have a particular letter-shape when it is written.

Let's take the word **dot**. When it is spoken it must have a recognizable d-sound at the beginning, o-sound in the middle, and t-sound at the end, and if we use a different sound at any one of these places, the word will lose its shape and cannot be recognized. If we replace d-sound by a t-sound, we hear **tot**, which is different in meaning, or if we replace the final t-sound by a p-sound, we hear **do**, which we do not recognize at all. Furthermore, the sounds must be in a particular order: **dot** is not **tod** or **odt** or **dto**.

Again, in a language like English, stress very often helps to give the word its individual shape. For example, the word '**perfect**' can be distinguished by its pronunciation. When the stress or emphasis is placed on the first syllable ('perfect), it is an adjective; whereas if the stress is placed on the second syllable, it becomes a verb (per'fect). Similarly stress can help to distinguish between a noun and a verb, e.g. 'record (N) and re'cord (V).

It should be noticed at this point that not all the distinctions of grammar and vocabulary are reflected in sound, e.g. **taut** and **taught** or **tort** are the same where sounds are concerned. Similarly, **by**, **bye**, and **buy**, are the same where sounds are concerned and not their meanings. Equally 'a tack' and 'attack' are rarely distinguished in pronunciation. By the nature of things *most* of the meaningful distinctions of the language must be capable of being given distinctive shape in sound, and it is this close dependence of sound and meaning which justifies the importance of the study of speech sound, i.e. **Phonetics**.

To learn phonetics we have to learn first how the air is set in motion, in the movement of the speech organs and the coordination of these movements in the production of single sounds and the sequence of sounds. This whole process is known as '**articulatory phonetics**.'

The next is the study of how the air vibrates between the mouth of the speaker and the ear of the listener. This study is called '**acoustic phonetics**'.



Now here we come to the hearing process. This is the nervous activity between the ear and the brain, i.e. in the sensation of hearing, which is brain activity – the means by which we discriminate sounds and the sensation of pitch, loudness, length and sound quality. This study centres on the hearer's reaction to stimuli that is fed into his ears. This area of study is of '**auditory phonetics**'.

The above three domains of phonetic study mentioned are all general in scope; they may be applied impartially to the sounds of any and every language, and they may be used to describe and classify, the sound feature of all known languages. Of course, Phoneticians or experts in the study of Phonology may not be fully satisfied with just describing and classifying. They would like to study further about the way in which sounds function in a particular language, how many or how few of all the sounds of language are utilized in that language, and what part they play in showing the meaningful distinctions of the language.

We must know what a sound is, how it is produced, what its physical characteristics are and what effect it has on the ear. At the same time we must know what the sound does because the same sound may have quite different tasks to perform in different languages. Study the difference in sound between **th** and **d** used in English to differentiate between one word and another e.g. **then/den**; **lather/ladder**; **breathe/breed**; etc.

### **Variation in pitch and meaning**

Variations of pitch plays a part in all languages but the basic function of those variations may be quite different in different languages. In English, pitch changes do not affect the shape of a word, i.e. we can pronounce a word such as '**no**' with a variety of pitch levels rising tone, falling tone or a combination of these, so as to add overtones of doubt, certainty, apathy, interrogation, etc. Yet the word remains the same old basic **negative**. In a language like Chinese, however, pitch pattern is the important part of the basic shape of the word. There are four different words in the National Language of China, all of which are pronounced rather like English **ma**, and they are distinguished by their patterns of pitch. '**ma**' with a high level pitch means '**mother**'; with rise from medium to high pitch, the meaning changes; **ma** then means '**hemp**'. A rise from low pitch to medium pitch gives the meaning '**scold**'. So, in Chinese, pitch is an essential part of the shape of the word. In English, pitch is not a part of word-shape but rather a part of the shape of longer bits of speech or utterances.



### 5.6.1 EXERCISE

1. Read these words aloud. Find a word with a different vowel sound. Circle that word:

girl                  curl                  pearl                  shirt                  heard  
word                  bird                  third                  hard.

2. Read these pairs of words. If the pronunciation is the same then write [S] in the brackets given against each pair. Write [D] for different. One is done for you.

- (i) 

|      |       |
|------|-------|
| hurt | heart |
|------|-------|

 [D]    (ii) 

|      |      |
|------|------|
| curd | card |
|------|------|

 [ ]    (iii) 

|     |     |
|-----|-----|
| fur | far |
|-----|-----|

 [ ]  
(iv) 

|     |     |
|-----|-----|
| son | sun |
|-----|-----|

 [ ]    (v) 

|     |      |
|-----|------|
| lip | leap |
|-----|------|

 [ ]    (vi) 

|      |     |
|------|-----|
| seat | sit |
|------|-----|

 [ ]  
(vii) 

|     |     |
|-----|-----|
| sew | sow |
|-----|-----|

 [ ]

3. How many speech sounds are there in the following words:

Pronounce each word and write the number in the brackets given. One is done for you.

write (3);      measure ( );      first ( );      scissors ( );  
read ( );      lick ( );      judge ( );      teacher ( );  
mat ( );      voice ( );      father ( );      through ( ).

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## 5.7 TYPES OF SOUND DIFFERENCES

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There are a wide variety of sounds and sound features. There are perhaps 4000 languages spoken in the world today. The sound resources of each of these languages are not necessarily completely different from those of every other language, but one thing has to be kept in mind, that no two languages ever have exactly the same sound resources. Within each language there are dialects which have their own distinctive pronunciations or accents. We can easily tell an American accent from an English accent and so on. We can even distinguish between different accents within our own language.

However, if we notice carefully we will find that each one of us, our friends, colleagues, acquaintances, notabilities have distinctive different pronunciation. We can recognize them by the sound of their voices and the way they articulate sounds, besides this, each one of us uses a different style of pronunciation in

different situations, e.g. when we talk in a relaxed way to friends and when we are addressing a big crowd at a meeting, the accent used tends to be different. We do not speak to our beloved as we would speak to a shop assistant or boss. Pronunciation is a part of the difference. So, the study of phonetics should not only include the description, classification and the use of sounds, but also the pronunciation of the language.

### Summary:

In this unit we have attempted to understand the importance of sound in spoken English and the role it plays in an utterance. We have also tried to make you aware of the need for teaching phonetics and also to draw your attention to the varieties of accents used in English, though for our purpose we have preferred to select one variety used by educated English Speakers, i.e. the R.P. for description.

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## 5.8 DIFFICULTIES IN PRONUNCIATION

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A speaker of English faces a number of difficulties where pronunciation is concerned.

1. He has to recognize readily and with certainty the various speech sounds in the language when he hears them pronounced. He must also learn to remember the acoustic qualities of these sounds.

2. He has to learn to produce those sounds correctly and use those sounds in their proper places in connected speech.

3. He must also learn to join each sound of a sequence on to the next, and to pronounce the complete sequence rapidly without any hindrance.

The ultimate object of the language learner will be to pronounce the complete sequence properly without any hesitation. To attain this proficiency he must in the initial stages of his study, focus his attention continually on details of the speech mechanism.

Ability to speak a language or understand it when spoken, does not involve the ability to read or write in the conventional way. One can learn to speak the language perfectly without even being aware of the **process** of production. On the other hand, a person can learn to read and write the language without being able to pronounce it.

### 5.8.1 EXERCISE

What's wrong with each of the following utterances? Rewrite them in the correct sequence and read them out aloud. State the kind of error.

- (a) People showed him respect for at the station.
- (b) He was waring a smart turban.
- (c) I have ordered for a new football.
- (d) I always keep my monye in this box.
- (e) He lives myserly in a way.

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## 5.9 HOW TO OVERCOME THE DIFFICULTIES IN PRONUNCIATION

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The first thing that we need is a good 'ear-training', or in other words 'cultivation of the auditory memory'. No one can be a successful linguist unless he has a good ear. If his ear is insensitive by nature, it may be made more sensitive by training; and if his ear is good by nature, it can be made much better by practice and training, i.e. if he has a good ear he will know whether he is pronouncing the foreign sound correctly or not. A good ear will help him to understand the language readily when spoken by native speakers and he will be able to recognize words instantly and will not mistake one word for another.

The possession of a good ear involves: (a) ability to discriminate between sounds, (b) ability to remember the acoustic qualities of foreign sounds, and (c) ability to recognize foreign sounds at once with certainty. In other words, students should be able to hear the differences between various sounds in a foreign language and between foreign sounds of his mother tongue. He must be able to bring into his consciousness memories of foreign sounds previously heard, and be able to compare sounds subconsciously with the memory-images of sounds previously heard. To cultivate all this, requires a good linguistic practice in listening for sounds.

In order to learn the form of the speech-sounds of a foreign language, the student has to learn to put his tongue, lips, and other parts of the organs of speech into certain definite positions, or to perform with them certain actions. In other words, the language learner should study **phonetic theory** and do, when necessary,

exercises based on that theory.

Besides this the student also has to learn what is the appropriate **order** in which to place the sounds so as to make intelligible words and sentences. A speaker, for instance, must know that if he wishes to communicate the idea expressed in French by 'armoire' and German by 'Schränk', he must form the English sounds /k ʌ b ə d/ one after the other in this order. No other English sounds will do, nor may these be placed in any other order. However well the speaker may pronounce the sounds, he will not convey any meaning, unless he uses this same particular sequence of sounds. He must therefore take care to remember that this is the required sequence.

Conventional English spelling is far from being phonetic; it does not give accurate information as to the sound-order required by the speaker of English. In the first place English assigns to many of the letters of the alphabet values quite different from those which people in foreign countries are used to associate with them, as for example: the letter **a** in **gate**, the **i** in **find**, the **u** in **tune**. A learner may learn the values of these letters without any difficulty, but as soon as the learner has learnt them, he finds so many words in which these letters have quite different values. For instance, study the sounds of the letter **a** in the following words :

father, any, fat, watch, fall.

They are not the same.

Now, study the sound of 'i' in the following words:

wind (N), machine, bird.

Again, the sound of the letter 'u' in **rule**, **put** and **but**. Compare also the **o** in **stove**, **move** and **love** and the **ea** in **meat**, **head**, **great**, **bear**, **earn**, **idea**, etc.

What do you notice? **Spelling is the same but pronunciation is different.**

Again English sounds may be spelt in a number of different ways. For instance, the words **meet**, **meat**, **niece**, **pique**, **key**, **quay**, **receive**, etc. all have the same vowel sound. So also have the words **sauce**, **lawn**, **stork**, **board**, **warn**, **thought**, **floor**, **broad**, etc.

You will find that there is constant contradiction between spelling and pronunciation which leads astray not only the beginners but even the expert. The result of such inconsistencies is that the foreign learner, who depends solely on ordinary orthography, is in innumerable cases at a loss to know what sounds should be used, and thus continually mispronounces words. However, such



mispronunciations may be avoided by the study and use of **phonetic transcription**.

You must bear in mind that phonetic transcriptions are of no value to those who have not learnt to form the sounds which the phonetic letters represent. But as soon as a learner can make the individual sounds with fair accuracy, he will be in a position to begin learning sequences of sounds. Phonetic transcriptions will tell him what are the proper sequences to learn in order to express the ideas he wishes to communicate. Unless the learner is able to pronounce each and every one of the sounds in /k ʌ b ə d/ with tolerable accuracy, he will not be able to say the English word **cupboard** even if he is provided with a phonetic transcription of the word.

A learner will generally be able to pronounce correctly in the matter of **length**, **stress**, and **pitch**, if he has been provided with such information. Sometimes, these may be applied by means of rules, and sometimes it is better conveyed by marks, in the phonetic transcriptions.

It sometimes happens that a learner can pronounce isolated sounds correctly, knows what sequence of sounds to use in a given word or sentence, and knows the necessary details in regard to length, stress, and pitch, but he stumbles over the sound sequence in longer utterances. This shows that he has not acquired the facility in passing from one sound to another, and he can not always pronounce sequences of sounds rapidly and without stumbling, in other words, he does not '**catenate**' properly.

Besides, he may have learnt the bad habit of stopping between words. He has not realized the important principle that the only places where pauses are normally made are at the ends of certain **grammatical groups** called **sense groups**.

The ability to catenate sounds, i.e. **to pronounce sequences of sounds with rapidity** and without **stumbling** can be cultivated by continued repetition and practice.

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## 5.10 TYPES OF PRONUNCIATION

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The first question that comes to the mind of a person who wishes to learn an acceptable pronunciation of, let's say the English language is: which of the various forms of pronunciation should be learnt?

No two persons of the same nationality pronounce their own language exactly alike. The difference may be due to the locality in which they live; social surroundings or early influences, and there may be individual peculiarities, **ideolects** for which



it is difficult or impossible to account.

It is seen that the pronunciation of English among people brought up in Manchester is different from those from Exeter, and both differ from the pronunciation of those brought up in Edinburgh or in London.

An example of differences of English pronunciation according to locality may be found in the treatment of the letter **r** in such words as 'part'. In Scotland the **r** is pronounced as a slightly rolled or flapped **r**, but in London English, the **r** is not pronounced and the pronunciation is /pa:t/. In many parts of the North and the West of England on the other hand, the effect of the **r** appears as a modification, known as '**retroflexion**' or '**inversion**' of the preceding vowel. In the south of England the vowels in **boot** and **book** are different, but in Scotland, a short closed **u** is generally used in both words.

There is also a difference in the pronunciation between 'educated' and 'uneducated' speech. People of limited education in many parts of England omit the **h** sound altogether. They say **elp** for help. In London (Cockney) words like **name** are pronounced with a diphthong /aɪ/ or /æɪ/ instead of /eɪ/; and words like **house**, **about** are pronounced with /æf/, or sometimes /əbæf t/ or /əbæət/. In uneducated Yorkshire speech the vowels of **put** /pʃ t/ and **cut** /k ʌ t/ are levelled to a vowel intermediate between these two.

Individual peculiarities may be the result of habit, e.g. childish mispronunciations which have never been corrected by the parents or teachers. Such mispronunciations may also arise from some physical defect.

Because of the existence of so many differences, it makes it difficult for the foreign learner to know which type of English pronunciation to learn. It is difficult to say which type is better and which type to describe as standard. But certainly the most useful type is the one based on the Southern speech which is generally used by those, who have been educated at Public Schools and preparatory Boarding Schools. It is easily understood in all parts of the English-speaking countries. In fact it is perhaps more widely understood than any other type. The term **Received Pronunciation** (RP) is often used to designate this type of pronunciation. However, it may be considered that there are other types of pronunciation which may be considered equally 'good'.

It is seen that all speakers use more than one style of pronunciation. A person may pronounce the same word or a sequence of words quite differently in different

circumstances. For instance, consider the word **and** which is often pronounced /n/ when it is unstressed, e.g. in bread and butter which is pronounced as /bred n b ^ t ə/, but when the word is stressed it is pronounced /ænd/ to rhyme with hand /hænd/.

There are several different styles of pronunciation. Notable among them are the rapid familiar style, the slower colloquial style, the natural style used while addressing an audience, the acquired style of the stage while acting and the acquired styles used in singing. Of these the slower colloquial style is perhaps the most suitable for beginners.

### 5.10.1 EXERCISE

1. 'Bear' and 'bare' are spelt differently but they are pronounced the same, /beə/. Make a list of five other points of words which are spelt differently but pronounced in the same way.
2. Read out these words and underline the **vowel sounds** in the following words. One is done for you:

|           |           |            |               |
|-----------|-----------|------------|---------------|
| important | remember  | alphabet   | London        |
| correct   | English   | particular | pronunciation |
| language  | necessary | letter     | property.     |

3. Find words to match the following words with a minimum difference only in the vowel sound. One is done for you:

|                         |               |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| (i) bend/ <b>band</b> ; | (iv) broke —; | (vii) sill —; |
| (ii) knit —;            | (v) force —;  | (viii) win —; |
| (iii) tale —;           | (vi) dawn —;  | (ix) ten —.   |

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## **UNIT 6 □ THE PRODUCTION OF SPEECH**

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### **6.1 The Organs of Speech**

### **6.2 Speech Mechanism**

#### **6.2.1 Exercise**

### **6.3 The Phoneme**

### **6.4 The Syllable**

#### **6.4.1 Exercise**

### **6.5 Bibliography**

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## **6.1 THE ORGANS OF SPEECH**

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There is no part of the human body which is specially designed for the production of speech. So, when we talk about the organs of speech, we refer to those parts of the body that help to produce speech sounds of a language or those that are incidentally useful for this purpose. These organs of speech have other duties to perform of their own, for example, breathing, chewing, swallowing, smelling and other such activities which are of course their primary functions.

The organs that are used for talking work in the same way in all human beings. So, everyone who is free from any kind of abnormalities is capable of pronouncing any sound, whatever the language may be without any difficulty. But as we grow older and have to learn a foreign language, attaining a level of perfection in the production of speech sounds becomes slightly difficult, and so we have to work very hard to make ourselves intelligible.

What we can say is that every individual upto a certain age is capable of pronouncing anything without any difficulty. A child can attain perfection in the pronunciation of any language, without any effort, provided it has sufficient incentive. As the child grows older, it generally loses its aptitude for imitating speech sounds. The adult certainly has to put in a lot of effort and time to be able to speak a foreign language even if he wants to be merely intelligible.

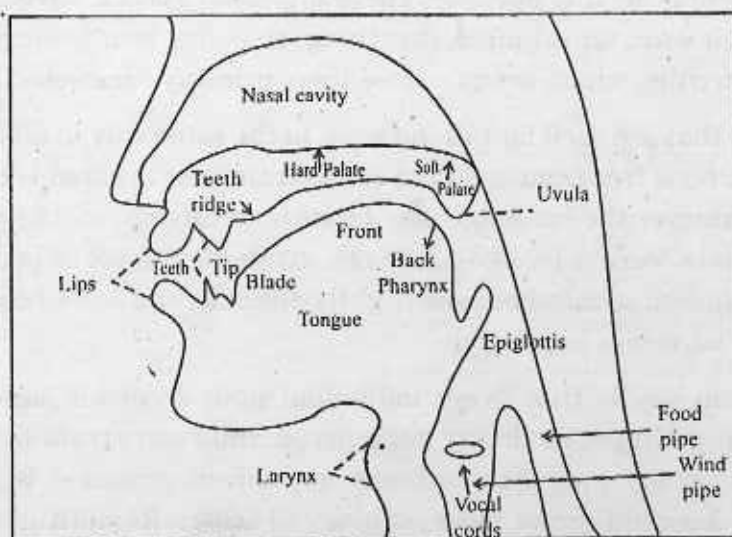
A child is capable of pronouncing all the sounds of the word's languages. In fact, it does pronounce a very large number of such sounds as it passes through what is called the 'babbling' stage of its linguistic development. A child, in learning to

talk, imitates the speech-sounds of the adults who surround it. While doing so, the child perhaps simply selects appropriate sounds from the very wide repertoire which it already possesses.

Study the figure below. More than half of a human body, from the head to the abdomen, is used in the production of spoken language. For this there are three groups or systems, of bodily organs that are brought together into cooperation. One such set of organs lies in the trunk, one in the throat, and one in the head, and they are usually known as the respiratory system, the phonatory system, and the articulatory system respectively. The way in which the three different groups of organs, with very different primary functions, are made to work together as a unified whole in order to produce speech is very remarkable.

Now let us consider each of these systems separately.

**1. The respiratory system** consists of the lungs, the muscles of the lungs by which they are compressed or dilated; the bronchial tubes, and the windpipe or trachea. The primary function of this system is to help us to breathe and supply oxygen to the blood.



**2. The phonatory system** is formed by the larynx (or voice box). This can be seen or felt externally in adult males and is commonly known as the 'Adam's apple'. The primary function of the larynx is to act as a valve which can shut off the lungs in order to protect them, and also to make the rib-cage rigid while breathing.

**3. The articulatory system** comprises the nose, the lips and the mouth and its contents including specially the teeth and the tongue, though all these organs have a number of primary functions, such as biting and chewing, sucking, tasting, smelling and swallowing – all of them closely connected with eating.

All these various organs also have a sound producing but non-linguistic act such as coughing, sneezing, sighing, yawning, sobbing, laughing as well as acts like hiccups. All these acts must have preceded speech in the history of human race as some of these acts also possess communicative value. They convey information of various kinds about the person performing those acts. Perhaps here we can find the connecting link between the more primitive functions of all these organs and their conditioning for human speech.

### **The Palate:**

The palate forms the roof of the mouth and separates the mouth cavity from the nasal cavity. The whole of the palate, including the soft palate, is used by the tongue to interfere with the air-stream. If you say the sounds /k a/ and look into the mirror, you will see the back part of the tongue rise up and touch the soft palate, so that the breath is completely stopped. Again, when you lower your tongue the breath rushes out again.

The hard, fixed part of the palate is divided into two parts – the alveolar ridge and the hard palate. The alveolar ridge is that part of the palate which is immediately behind the upper front teeth, and the hard palate is the highest part of the palate, between the alveolar ridge and the beginning of the soft palate. The alveolar ridge is very important in English because many of the consonant sounds are made with the tongue touching or close to the alveolar ridge.

### **The Teeth:**

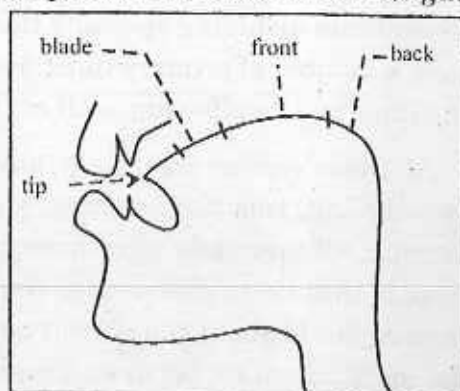
The lower part of the teeth is not so important in speech. But if one or two of the lower front teeth are missing then it would be difficult to produce certain sounds like /s/ and /z/. But the two upper front teeth are used in speaking English to some extent.

### **The Tongue:**

The tongue is the most important of the organs of speech as it has the greatest variety of movement. Although the tongue has no obvious natural divisions like the



plate, it is useful to think of it as divided into four parts. The **back** of the tongue lies under the soft palate when the tongue is at rest, the **front** of the tongue lies under the hard palate, and the **tip** and the **blade** lie under the alveolar ridge, the tip being the most forward part of all and the blade is between the tip and the front. The tip and the blade are particularly mobile as they can touch the whole of the lips, the teeth, the teeth ridge and the hard palate.



### The lips:

We see that the lips can take up various different positions. They can be brought firmly together so that they completely block the mouth, e.g. while pronouncing /p/ or /b/. The lower lip can be drawn inward and slightly upwards to touch the upper front teeth, e.g. while producing the sounds /f/ and /v/. They can be kept either flat or with different amounts of rounding, and they can be pushed forward to a greater or lesser extent.

However, you should study the movements of the speech organs for a certain sound of English and try to compare them with the movements for a similar sound in your mother tongue. Try to become conscious of what your speech organs are doing.

### The Ear:

Though the ear is not a part of the speech producing mechanism, we must include the ear among the vocal organs. Speech is of no use unless we are able to receive and produce, and the main organ of reception is the **ear**. The eyes also play a role in communication as they contribute to understanding speech by lip-reading while watching people talk as deaf persons do.

We do not listen to speech as we listen to music, as speech is meaningful sound. Here we listen to sound as a medium for language. Usually our whole attention is drawn towards meaning and not the sound as such. Listening to music may also be meaningful, but here the sounds are the meaning and receive the whole of our attention. Sometimes, we come into conscious awareness of speech particularly when the language is one that we can not understand. The rest of the time we are hardly aware when we are listening to people talking. The ear is important to the

speaker as well as to the listener.

The sound of speech, on the one hand, and the movements producing the sound, on the other, are closely linked both for the speaker as well as the listener. The speaker and the listener are usually considered as two distinct and separate roles in conversation, but in fact they are indispensable to each other, because, the speaker is also the hearer, and a hearer is, in a way, simultaneously also a speaker. Recognition of this identity of speaker and hearer, or 'phonetic empathy', is important in understanding the various problems in the perception of speech. Every thing to do with the mechanics of speech has, with normal people, become quite unconscious through long habit of talking. This is certainly essential for the efficient functioning of the spoken language. As speakers we need all our attention for what we are saying, and we have none to spare for how we say it. In the same way, we need all our attention, as listeners, for what is being said, and we are not aware of the mechanics of its production, unless we consciously wish to do so.

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## 6.2 SPEECH MECHANISM

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### Air-stream Mechanism

Speech consists of movements made audible. An air-stream, provided by the action of some of the organs of speech, makes audible the movements of other organs. Of course, there are a few noises that can be produced by some speech organs without the help of an air-stream, such as gnashing or grinding the teeth; flapping the tongue, making the teeth to chatter etc. But none of these sounds occur in any existing language. An air-stream is the basis of the whole gamut of sound, in all its variety. An air-stream is produced by an **air-stream mechanism**.

An air-stream mechanism can be compared to a pair of bellows which can be seen in a smithy, or a child's pop-gun, where an enclosed body of air is set in motion by movements of one part of the apparatus, in this case speech-producing apparatus called the '**initiator**'. The initiator sets an air-stream in motion, and it is the most important part of an air-stream mechanism.

Three main types of air-stream mechanism are used in human speech and each mechanism has a different initiator. All three mechanisms may be used to push air out (called the egressive air-stream) or to pull it in (called the ingressive air-stream).

## 1. The Pulmonic Air-stream Mechanism:

It consists of the **lungs** and the **respiratory muscles**. These muscles move the walls of the lungs, which form the initiator, so that air is either drawn into the lungs or pushed out of them. It is this air-stream mechanism which is the basis of almost all human speech, and it is the **egressive pulmonic air-stream** which is used in normal talking or singing. An **ingressive pulmonic air-stream** is used in various non-linguistic acts of the organs of speech, such as for yawning, or most kinds of snoring. Linguistic use of an ingressive pulmonic air-stream is not common.

The pulmonic air-stream mechanism is used for ordinary normal breathing, though it is not used for this purpose in exactly the same way as it is used for speech. **Speaking**, it has been said, 'is modified breathing'. Under normal conditions, the rhythmic movements which the lungs make for breathing are unconscious, and only those movements needed for **breathing in** form an active process; **breathing out** is merely a mechanical result of having breathing in, which does not require any muscular effort. When the pulmonic egressive air-stream is used for speaking, breathing out or expiration must become an active process and must be brought under muscular control. This is part of what is meant by saying that '**speaking**' is modified breathing.

### The Glottis:

The pulmonic air-stream on its way into or out of the lungs has to pass through the **wind pipe** or **trachea**. At the top of the trachea is the complicated organ called the **larynx**. The larynx plays an important role in the production of speech. The most important parts of it are the **vocal cords**. They are also known as **vocal bands**, **lips**, **ligaments**, **folds** or **ledges**. They are best thought of as a pair of lips placed from front to back horizontally across the top of the wind pipe, joined in front but movable in such a way that they can be either **brought** together into contact, or pulled wide apart to form a V-shaped opening from the wind pipe into the throat or **pharynx**.

The space between the vocal cords is called the **glottis**. The vocal cords can bring about a number of different states of the glottis, and the state of the glottis during the production of speech by the pulmonic air-stream mechanism is extremely important. It is enough to distinguish the following four states of the glottis:

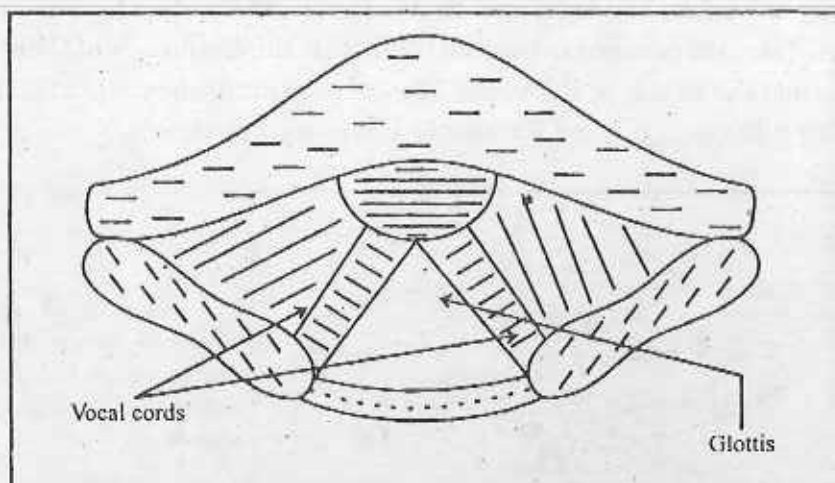
- (a) open glottis ('breath state')
- (b) glottis in vibration ('voice state')

(c) narrow glottis ('whisper state')

(d) closed glottis.

Now, let us describe each of these states in a little more detail :

(a) The glottis may be **open**. The vocal cords are drawn apart, so that the air-stream can pass through them quite freely and easily. This is the state of the glottis in normal breathing, and it produces no sound, or at best a gentle rustling sound. This state of the glottis is commonly assumed in speech, and when it does so it is said to be the state or position for '**breath**'. Any segment of speech which is produced with the glottis open is said to be produced '**with breath**', or to be '**breathed**' or to be **voiceless**.



Vocal cords wide apart and the glottis fully open during the production of a voiceless sound.

(b) The glottis may be in vibration where the vocal cords are alternately brought into contact and blown apart by the force of the pulmonic air-stream flowing through the glottis. The force of the air-stream and the tension of the vocal cords are adjusted so that they flap open and shut many times a second, allowing the air-stream to pass through in a series of rapid puffs. This '**vibration**' of the vocal cords constitutes the process called **phonation** (i.e the phonatory system for the larynx) and produces a buzzing sound called **voice**. This state of the glottis is therefore known as the **voice state**. When the glottis is in vibration the effect can be clearly felt on the surface of the front of the throat by placing the fingers there.

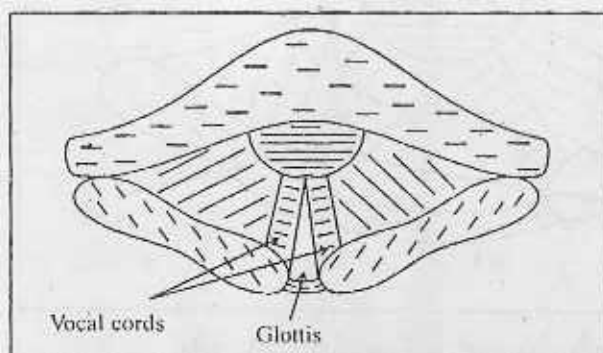
In normal speaking with the pulmonic egressive air-stream, it is voice which is



responsible for most of the noise that is made. However, voice is not continuous during speech as part of the time the glottis is in vibration and part of the time it is not. If we utter the word **fever**, it can be seen that both at the beginning and in the middle of the word there is movement of the lower lip towards the upper teeth. But the sound is not the same on the two occasions, and this is because the glottis is open for the first, but in vibration for the second.

Any segment of speech which is produced while the glottis is in vibration is said to be produced '**with voice**', or to be **voiced**, as distinct from **voiceless** segments which are produced '**with breath**'.

The opening and the closing of the vocal cords can take place at varying speeds, the frequency at which they open and shut is governed by their tension and by the force of the air-stream brought to bear on them. It is the frequency of their vibration that determines the **pitch** of the voice. The more rapidly they vibrate, the higher the note. The pitch of the voice fluctuates while we are talking.



Vocal cords kept closely together so that they vibrate during the production of voiced sounds.

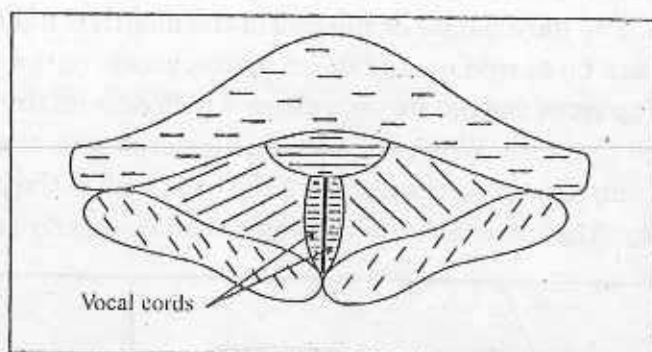
(c) The glottis may be **narrowed**. Here the vocal cords are brought close together, but not so close that they are set into vibration. Because of this narrowing the air-stream is impeded as it passes through the glottis. This reduces the force of the air-stream and produces a soft hissing sound resulting in a **whisper**. Any segment of an utterance which is produced with the glottis in this state is said to be whispered and the state itself is known as the **whispered state** of the glottis.

The whispered state of the glottis occurs not only in the course of '**whispering**', but also in a wide variety of other circumstances in the pronunciation of many languages including English.

(d) The vocal cords may be entirely shut. In this state the vocal cords are brought together with sufficient firmness to prevent the air-stream from forcing them apart. The air-stream is thus completely interrupted, and the lungs are for



the duration of the closure, cut off from the outside air. The glottis for a moment assumes this position for coughs and hiccups and other non-linguistic acts, and also for the '**glottal stop**' which is very common of many British dialects and forms of speech.



The vocal cords brought together with sufficient firmness. The lung air is sent up below it to produce a 'glottal stop'.

## 2. The Glottalic Air-stream Mechanism:

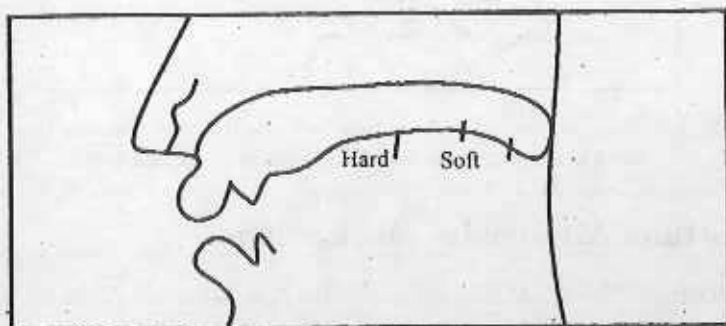
The closed state of the glottis produces the basis for an air-stream mechanism called the **glottalic** air-stream mechanism. The larynx, can be moved up and down in the throat. And if this is done when the glottis is closed, the larynx acts as an initiator. The air it sets in motion is the air in the pharynx and above; the air below the larynx, in the trachea, bronchial tubes and lungs, is not affected and takes no part in the air-stream.

Sounds produced by an ingressive or egressive glottalic air-stream are found in many languages, particularly common in languages of the Caucasus, of Africa, and of Central and North America. They occur at times even in English and French. Vowels pronounced with this mechanism are inaudible. It is therefore, not found as a mechanism for continuous speech. This is the mechanism used while belching.

### The Velum:

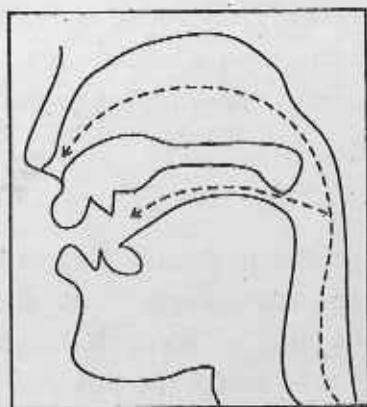
The egressive pulmonic or glottalic air-stream has two exits to the outer air, i.e. at **the nostrils** and at **the lips**. The way to the two exits diverge in the throat above the larynx, one path leading to the outer air through the nasal cavity and the nose, and the other leading to the outer air through the mouth. Both these paths can also be the entrances for an ingressive air-stream.

The outlet through the nose may be opened or shut at will by means of a valve which is placed at the point where the two paths diverge. The roof of the mouth, or **palate**, can be felt with the tongue to be hard and bony. Just behind the upper front teeth is the alveolar ridge, and for some distance further back, suddenly you can feel that it becomes quite soft, and continues to be so all the way back until it ends in the uvula. The hard palate or the roof of the mouth is fixed and immovable, but the soft part can be moved up and down by the action of the muscles attached to it. It is this soft part of the palate, or **velum** which acts as the valve controlling the outlet through the nose. When the velum is lowered, the nasal cavity is open, and when it is raised, it makes a contact with the back wall of the pharynx, shutting off the nasal cavity. This movement of the velum can be clearly seen in the mirror.



The soft and hard parts of the palate.

If the velum is raised, the only path for the air-stream to escape is through the mouth, but if it is lowered, the air-stream can escape both through the mouth as well as through the nose. But if the obstruction in the mouth is brought into play while the velum is lowered, the air-stream will escape only through the nose. Thus in **humming**, for example, the lips are brought together tightly without any exit



The soft palate lowered.

for the air-stream to escape through the mouth, and the velum being lowered, the air-stream escapes through the nose.

When the velum is raised, there is a **velic closure**. When the velum is lowered, there is no velic closure. Any part of an utterance that is produced without a velic closure is said to be **nasal** or **nasalized**. The part which is produced with a velic closure is said to be **oral**. During normal conversation the velum is constantly raised and lowered. In other words, normal speech consists of alternating nasal and oral stretches.

We mentioned earlier that the passage through the nose can be opened or shut at will, it is not quite true, as we are normally unconscious of its actions and unaware of which muscles control its movements.

A '**nasal twang**', common in American English, is the result of keeping the velum lowered almost all the time a person is speaking. Smokers can very easily test whether the velum is raised or lowered if they have the habit of inhaling the smoke, for this makes the egressive air-stream visible. An absence of velic closure can be clearly seen by the appearance of smoke from the nostrils when the smoker exhales.

### **3. The Velaric Air-stream Mechanism:**

This is the third and the last of the air-stream mechanisms. The initiator in this case is the back part of the tongue lifted up so that it comes firmly into contact with the velum and it is then pushed forward in the mouth to make an egressive air-stream, or pulled back to make an ingressive air-stream. Because the initiator is this closure of the tongue against the velum, the mechanism is called the **velaric air-stream mechanism**. It sets in motion only the air in the mouth and the air in the rest of the vocal tract plays no part in the production.

Sounds produced by an ingressive velaric air-stream are found interspersed in the stream of pulmonic – egressively produced utterance. This is common in certain languages in Africa, specially perhaps in Zulu, Hottentot and Bushman. These sounds are called '**clicks**'. 'Clicks' occur in many parts of the world as interjections. The sound that English speakers use to express annoyance, and represent in writing as tut-tut, or tsk-tsk, is made by an ingressive velaric air-stream. The sound made to encourage horses is also a click (the 'gee-up' click).

The entire velaric air-stream mechanism is confined to the mouth and it makes therefore no difference to its functioning whether the velum is at the time making

a velic closure or not. If it is not making a closure, a pulmonic or glottalic air-stream is free to pass through the nasal cavity at the same time as a velaric mechanism is in action. Various combinations of air-stream mechanisms are thus not only possible but also used in certain circumstances.

Therefore it is seen that a number of different processes are involved in the production of speech. There are the processes which produce the three different air-streams – there is the breath, voice or whisper-producing process for which the state of the glottis is responsible. Then there is the nasalization process, for which the valve-action of the velum is responsible.

### 6.2.1 EXERCISE

1. Answer the following questions in brief:

- (a) What role do the lungs play in the production of speech?
- (b) What is the articulation stage of speech?
- (c) What is the receptive stage of communication by speech?
- (d) Where is the larynx situated? What is another name for it?
- (e) Where are the vocal cords? What do they consist of?
- (f) Where and what is the glottis?
- (g) What type of sound is produced when the vocal cords are —
  - (i) wide open, (ii) vibrating, and (iii) shut?
- (h) What happens to the soft palate during normal breathing?
- (i) Why do we say **bordig** instead of **morning** when we have a cold?
- (j) Where and what is the alveolar ridge?

2. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences:

- (a) Speech is produced when the organs of speech ——— to produce a pattern of ———.
- (b) These movements have an effect in the ——— coming from the lungs.
- (c) The ——— sent out from the lungs through the ——— contained in the larynx.

- (d) The opening between the vocal cords or the ——— can be either wide open or narrowed or ———.
- (e) If the glottis is wide open, the air passes freely through the ———, but if it is narrowed, the presence of the air causes the cords to ——— producing ———.

## 6.3 THE PHONEME

The speech mechanism of a human being is capable of producing an infinite number of speech sounds. Every language makes its own selection from this vast human range of speech sounds. The selection that a particular language makes, constitutes its sound system which consists of a large number of speech sounds. But not all of these sounds are important, i.e. not all of these sounds make any meaningful difference between words and help convey distinctions of meaning in communication between two individuals speaking that language.

Let us take for example the word **cake** /k<sup>h</sup>eik/. Here the first and the last /k/ sounds are not the same, but the phoneticians will make a distinction between the two, though he knows that they are phonetically similar. The first sound /k<sup>h</sup>/ in this word is aspirated (i.e. pronounced with an accompanying puff of breath) and the last /k/ sound is unaspirated and unexploded (i.e. pronounced without an audible release of the complete closure). In the word **sky** /skai/, we have another /k/ sound which is phonetically similar to, but not the same as the two /k/ sounds in 'cake'. Now, these three /k/ sounds are neither contrastive or distinctive, i.e. the substitution of one for another in these words will not give a different word. In other words, though these three phonetically similar sounds are different in one way or the other in English, i.e. it is not important for the purpose of communication and therefore these sounds can be grouped together into one sound /k/ in English.

Now, let us look at the words **cake** /k<sup>h</sup>eik/ and **bake** /beik/. The difference between them consists only in one sound in the initial position. But this difference is of a different kind from that between the /k/ sounds stated earlier. The substitution of the sound /b/ for the sound /k/ in the same position gives us a different word, i.e. it brings about the difference in meaning between **cake** and **bake**. The difference between /b/ and /k/ is thus taken to be contrastive in this position. Besides, /b/ and /k/ are phonetically more dissimilar sounds than /k<sup>h</sup>/ and /k/. Sound /b/ is bilabial and /k/ is velar. So, **two phonetically dissimilar sounds**



like /b/ and /k/, which can occur in the same position and are contrastive, are called **phonemes**. If we substitute some other sounds for /k/ in the word /k<sup>h</sup>eɪk/, we will get **sake, fake, make, lake, shake, take, rake, and wake**. The sounds /s/, /t/, /m/, /l/, /j/, /t/, /r/ and /w/ are all phonemes, because they are phonetically dissimilar and contrast with /k/ in the same position.

Similarly, if we substitute sounds which contrast with /k/ in the final position of the same word, we get **cape, case, cave, kate, came and cane**, and here we get the phonemes /p/, /s/, /v/, /t/, /m/ and /n/. Again by substituting the diphthong /ei/ in the word **cake**, which is in the medial position for other vowel sounds, e.g. kick /k<sup>h</sup>ɪk/, cork /k<sup>h</sup>ɒk/, coke /k<sup>h</sup>əuk/, we get the phonemes /ɪ/, /ə/ and /əʊ/. In this way we can get all the phonemes used in the English language and thus draw up an inventory of the phonemes of any language.

Every language makes use of a limited number of phonemes. English, for example, has 44 phonemes in its sound system. We must remember that since phonemes are contrastive units of sound in the sound system of a given language, they have validity only in relation to that language.

Sounds that are phonemes of one language may be only allophones of another language, e.g. /p/, /p<sup>h</sup>/, are allophones in English but /p/ in /p<sup>h</sup>1/ (moment) and /p<sup>h</sup>1/ (fruit) in Hindi are two different phonemes.

### ALLOPHONES:

In the word **cake** /k<sup>h</sup>eɪk/ and **scale** /skeɪl/, we see that /k<sup>h</sup>/, /k/ and /k/ are similar sounds, yet different from one another and the difference between them is not contrastive. The difference between them depends upon their position in the word. For example, in English /k<sup>h</sup>/ can occur only in the initial position in an accented syllable, /k/ only in the final position, and /k/ in /skeɪl/ only after /s/. In other words, these three sounds occur in predictable and mutually exclusive positions in English. They are in complimentary distribution with one another. Such phonetically similar sounds in complementary distribution in relation to one another are called positional variants or **allophones** of the same phoneme. Another example from English would be phoneme /t/ which has two positional variant in words like **loyal** and **field**. /t/ is articulated with the tip of the tongue making a complete closure with the teeth ridge for /t/, the back of the tongue also goes up simultaneously to articulate with the soft palate. /t/ occurs before vowels and /j/, and is called clear /t/, and /t/ occurs before consonants (minus /j/ and word finally, and is called dark /t/. Thus the phoneme /t/ has two allophones.

## 6.4 THE SYLLABLE

The phonemes of a language combine to form the next higher unit of an utterance. The unit at the next higher level than the phoneme is called the **syllable**. The syllable is a very significant unit in the production of speech without which we can not analyse and describe speech. It is difficult to define the syllable, but it is easy to identify syllables in a word.

### Division of words into syllables :

A word consists of one or more than one syllable. It is easy to identify the syllables in the English words for example :

|                  |   |                 |
|------------------|---|-----------------|
| rat              | — | one syllable    |
| remove           | — | two syllables   |
| removal          | — | three syllables |
| degenerate       | — | four syllables  |
| electricity      | — | five syllables  |
| characterization | — | six syllables.  |

So, the smallest unit of an utterance is a syllable. Nothing less than a syllable can be uttered. The syllable is a minimum unit of an utterance.

A syllable can be divided into three phases that coincide with the three segments of a syllable, e.g.

| (marginal)<br>releasing phase | (central)<br>segment | (marginal)<br>arresting phase |       |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------|
| x                             | oh!                  | x                             | = XVX |
| g                             | o                    | x                             | = CVX |
| g                             | oa                   | t                             | = CVC |
| x                             | oa                   | t                             | = XVC |

### Definition of a syllable:

A syllable is a unit of utterance containing one and only one vowel either alone or surrounded by consonants.

### A syllable pattern :

A syllable may contain as many as three consonants at the releasing phase and as many as four consonants at the arresting phase. These consonant clusters often

cause problems to speakers who speak in a language that does not contain such clusters.

### Examples of syllable patterns :

(a) With consonant clusters at the releasing phase :

|     |     |   |   |        |
|-----|-----|---|---|--------|
| (a) | x   | l | x | = v    |
|     | p   | i | x | = cv   |
|     | sp  | y | x | = ccv  |
|     | spr | y | x | = cccv |

(b) Consonant clusters at the arresting phase :

|     |   |   |     |          |
|-----|---|---|-----|----------|
| (b) | t | e | ch  | = cvc    |
|     | t | c | chs | = cvcc   |
|     | t | e | xt  | = cvccc  |
|     | t | e | xts | = cvcccc |

When a syllable contains no arresting phase then the syllable is said to be an open syllable.

**Example :** play = ccv (open syllable)

When a syllable contains an arresting phase, then the syllable is said to be closed.

**Example :** boat = cvc (closed syllable)

Different languages have different syllable patterns. Some languages have more closed syllables than open syllables whereas some have more open syllables than closed syllables. For example – in the Oriya language almost all the syllables are open. Bengali or Hindi has more open syllables than closed syllables. But English has more closed syllables than open syllables.

### 6.4.1 EXERCISE

1. Give two words for each of the following words which differ in **only one** sound segment. One is done for you.

few : chew  
          mew

waste : \_\_\_\_\_  
          \_\_\_\_\_

bed : \_\_\_\_\_  
          \_\_\_\_\_

poor : \_\_\_\_\_  
          \_\_\_\_\_

leisure : \_\_\_\_\_  
          \_\_\_\_\_

cattle : \_\_\_\_\_  
          \_\_\_\_\_

2. point out the number of syllables in each of the following words. Put the number

in the brackets. One is done for you.

ancestors = (3)      monotonous = ( )      dramatists = ( )

laboratory = ( )      remarkable = ( )      strangers = ( )

3. Give two examples of each of the following:

(a) An initial consonant cluster  
with two consonants: \_\_\_\_\_ ; \_\_\_\_\_

(b) An initial consonant cluster  
with three consonants: \_\_\_\_\_ ; \_\_\_\_\_

(c) A final consonant cluster with  
four consonants: \_\_\_\_\_ ; \_\_\_\_\_

(d) A final consonant cluster  
with three consonants: \_\_\_\_\_ ; \_\_\_\_\_

(e) A syllable without any  
consonant: \_\_\_\_\_ ; \_\_\_\_\_

4. Tick the right word in the following sentences:

(a) There's our <sup>Bess</sup> { boss / bus } over there. We must catch it before it leaves.

(b) Do you want this letter or this book?

The <sup>latter</sup> { letter / later } please.

(c) That <sup>soap</sup> { sop / soup } smells very good and its tasty too.

(d) The <sup>bowl</sup> { bull / ball } we saw was black and white. Mother needs it to pour the soup.

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## **UNIT 7 □ STRUCTURAL PHONOLOGY : SEGMENTAL & SUPRASEGMENTAL FEATURES**

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### **7.0 Objectives**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

##### **7.1.1 Function of Phonology**

##### **7.1.2 Segmental Phonology**

##### **7.1.3 The Description of Speech Sounds**

##### **7.1.4 Description of Consonants**

#### **7.2 Place and Manner of Articulation**

##### **7.2.1 Sounds made with an Ingressive air-stream**

##### **7.2.1.1 Exercise**

##### **7.2.2 The Classification and Description of the Vowel Sounds**

##### **7.2.3 Diphthongs or Vowel Glides**

##### **7.2.4 Exercise**

#### **7.3 Suprasegmental Features**

##### **7.3.1 Stress in English — Some Rules and Their Exceptions**

##### **7.3.2 The Study of English Intonation**

##### **7.3.3 English Pronunciation**

##### **7.3.4 Exercise**

#### **7.4 Bibliography**

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## **7.0 OBJECTIVES**

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When you study this unit you will be able to:

- (i) recognize the various segmental phonemes of the sounds of English.
- (ii) Practice the pronunciation of these phonemes or sounds following the guidelines mentioned.
- (iii) recognize the basic outlines of supra-segmental features of pronunciation, e.g. accent, stress, intonation.

## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

As you already know, phonetics is the study of the production and reception of all speech sounds; that it refers to all possible sounds in all languages; that the full range of sounds possible in any human language is enormously wide and that there are innumerable ways the tongue and lips can move for articulation, and that the articulatory movements may synchronize with different states of the glottis or with the air-stream mechanism.

However, only a limited selection of these possible speech sounds is used by the speakers of any single language. Moreover, the selection is not only limited, it is also different in all the other languages. This selection is then formed into a pattern which is unique to that language. The selection and the pattern into which it is formed make up the phonology of the language.

### 7.1.1 FUNCTION OF PHONOLOGY

Phonology studies and describes the distinctive sound units of a specific language and their relationships to one another. The phonology of a language is therefore, unique to that language and is different from that of every other language. In this unit, we are going to deal with the sounds of English language only.

A phonological approach does not attempt to establish relationship between the sounds of a specific language and the general human phonetic resources. One of its aims is to identify the contrastive units of the sound system of a language – those units which will **distinguish the meaning of words**.

### 7.1.2 SEGMENTAL PHONOLOGY

When we speak, we produce an infinite number of speech sounds. To identify these streams of speech sounds, we divide the stream into small bits or **segments**. For example, the word **cat** has three segments – /k/ a first segment, /æ/ the middle segment and /t/ the final segment. From this large number of varying phonetic segments, each language makes a selection of sounds which are functional in that language. These smallest segments of sounds are called phonemes.

(If you look at **unit 2.3**, you will get a clear idea of the concept of phonemes.)

Two notions are important when we aim to describe a language, these are: **paradigmatic** and **syntagmatic** relations (or system and structure).

Let us clarify the notions using an example:

In the following list of words

|   |    |    |        |
|---|----|----|--------|
| p | ee | p  | /pip/  |
| t | ea | t  | /ti:t/ |
| c | ea | se | /si:s/ |

the consonants in the initial position (/p/, /t/, /s/) are said to be in paradigmatic relations with each other. The final (/p/, /t/, /s/) are also in paradigmatic relations with each other. The /p/, /t/, /s/ in the first set are said to be in **parallel** distribution with each other, i.e. they occur in the same place (initial place) in structure, whereas /p/, /t/, /s/ in the second set are said to be in **complementary** distribution with the first set being the same phonemes. So, all these six items will be considered as three different phonemes (and **not** six).

Items which occur in different places in a structure and which can never contrast can be grouped. Let us consider the items in the following paradigm:

|   |     |       |
|---|-----|-------|
| k | eep | /kip/ |
| c | ap  | /kæp/ |
| c | up  | /kʌp/ |

Here all the /k/ sounds occur in the same place in the structure (i.e. in the initial paradigm). However, they are phonetically different because the articulation of /k/ in each case is conditioned by that of the following vowel. The /k/ sounds cannot contrast because they occur in the same paradigm and the articulation of each /k/ depends on the following vowel. The three /k/ sounds are grouped into one phoneme /k/. The phonetic variants which are grouped into one phoneme are said to be **allophones** of that phoneme. So the initial consonants in 'keep', 'cap', 'cup' are said to be allophones of /k/.

(Remember that items which are phonetically dissimilar may not be grouped into one phoneme.)

### 7.1.3 THE DESCRIPTION OF SPEECH SOUNDS

The description of speech sounds necessitates the provision of certain basic information:

(a) The nature of air-stream which is usually the egressive pulmonic air-stream. Though later, cases where ingressive air-stream is used will be considered.

(b) The position of the vocal cords, particularly whether they are closed, wide apart or vibrating.

(c) The position of the soft palate which will decide whether or not the sound has nasal resonances.

(d) The disposition of the various movable organs of the mouth, i.e. the shape of the lips and tongue, in order to determine the nature of the related oral and upper pharyngeal cavities.

Besides this, it may be necessary to provide other information concerning the tenseness which may accompany the primary articulation, or when it is a question of a sound with no steady state to describe, an indication of the kind of movement which is taking place.

When we listen to a continuous utterance, we perceive an everchanging pattern of sound. But, when it is a question of our own language, i.e. the mother tongue, we are not aware of the complexities of pattern which reach our ears. We tend consciously to perceive and interpret only those sound features which are relevant to the intelligibility of our language. However, despite this linguistic selection which we ultimately make, we are aware that this changing pattern consists of variations of different kinds, for example:

- of **sound quality**— we hear a variety of vowels and consonants;
- of **pitch** — we appreciate the melody, or intonation of the utterance;
- or **loudness** — we will agree that some sounds or syllables seem to sound louder than others;
- and of **length** — some sounds are appreciably longer to our ears than others.

These are judgements made by a listener in respect of an utterance uttered by a speaker and, if the sound stimulus from the speaker and response from the listener are made in terms of the same linguistic system, then the utterance will be meaningful, for both speaker and listener alike. It can, therefore, be assumed that there should be some constant relationship between the speaker's articulation and the listener's reception of sound variations, though an exact correlation between the **production, transmission and reception** phases of speech is not always easy to establish.

Now, let us begin with the description of the consonant sounds.

#### 7.1.4 DESCRIPTION OF CONSONANTS

There are twenty four distinctive consonant sounds in English. The consonants are marked by two features: functionally, they tend to be marginal in the syllable, in other words, they occur either in the syllable initial and/or syllable final positions, and, in terms of their phonetic nature, their articulations involve obstructions or narrowings which produce a noise component.

(If you look at **unit 2.3** you will get a clear idea of consonants as marginal segments in a syllable.)

The twenty-four consonantal phonemes are classified in two general categories:

(a) Those articulations that involve a total closure or those that involve a structure causing friction. Both groups are typically associated with a noise component. These phonemes are symbolized as:

/p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/,

/f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/.

(b) Those articulations in which there is only a partial closure or in which the air escapes unimpeded through oral or nasal passage. Such articulations are typically voiced and frequently frictionless (without a noise component). These phonemes are symbolized as:

/m/, /n/, /y/, /h/, /l/, /w/, /r/, /j/.



The essential factors to be included in any classification of consonantal articulations must refer to:

1. The place of articulation.
2. The manner of articulation.
3. The presence or absence of voice.
4. The position of the soft plate.

The following chart will give you a clear picture. It is based on a vertical axis showing **manner of articulation**; a horizontal axis showing **place of articulation**, a pairing of consonantal types to show the **voiceless** variety on the left and the **voiced** variety on the right; and an extra column under 'manner' to include the relatively few consonantal types which require the lowered position of the soft palate. The symbols used are of the sound types of British English.

| Place<br>Manner                                                 | Bilabial | Labio-<br>dental | Dental | Alveolar | Post-<br>Alveolar | Palato-<br>Alveolar | Palatal | Velar | Glottal |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------|------------------|--------|----------|-------------------|---------------------|---------|-------|---------|
| <b>Complete oral<br/>closure</b><br>Plosive                     | p b      |                  |        | t d      |                   |                     |         | k ɡ   | ʔ       |
| Affricate                                                       |          |                  |        |          |                   | tʃ dʒ               |         |       |         |
| Nasal                                                           | m        |                  |        | n        |                   |                     |         | ŋ     |         |
| <b>Narrowing</b><br>Fricative                                   |          | f v              | θ ð    | s z      |                   | ʃ ʒ                 |         |       | h       |
| <b>Partial Closure</b><br>Lateral                               |          |                  |        | l        |                   |                     |         |       |         |
| <b>Intermittent<br/>Closure</b><br>Roll                         |          |                  |        | (r)      |                   |                     |         |       |         |
| <b>Frictionless<br/>Continuant or<br/>Glide</b><br>Approximants | w        |                  |        |          |                   |                     | j       |       |         |

It is evident from the above table that

- (a) six of the English consonants are plosives;
- (b) two are affricates;
- (c) three are nasals;
- (d) nine are fricatives;
- (e) one is a lateral; and
- (f) three are approximants.

## 7.2 PLACE AND MANNER OF ARTICULATION

**I. Places of articulation** (particularly the sounds of English) are as follows:

**Bilabial** : The two lips are the primary articulators (e.g. /p/, /b/, /m/).

**Labio-dental** : The lower lips articulate with the upper teeth (e.g. /f/, /v/).

**Dental** : The tongue tip and rims articulate with the upper teeth (e.g. θ, ð).

**Alveolar** : The blade, or tip and blade of the tongue articulate with the alveolar ridge (e.g. /t/, /d/, /l/, /n/, /s/, /z/).

**Post-alveolar** : The tip (and rims) of the tongue articulate with the rear part of the alveolar ridge (e.g. /r/).

**Palato-alveolar** : The blade, or the tip and blade, of the tongue articulate with the alveolar ridge and there is at the same time a raising of the front of the tongue towards the hard palate (e.g. /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/).

**Palatal** : The front of the tongue articulates with the hard palate, (e.g. /j/).

**Velar** : The back of the tongue articulates with the soft palate, (e.g. /k/, /g/, /ŋ/).

**Glottal** : An obstruction, or a narrowing causing friction but not vibration, between the vocal cords, (e.g. /ʔ/, /h/).

### II Manner of articulation :

The obstruction that is made by the organs of speech may be total, intermittent, partial, or may merely constitute a narrowing sufficient to cause friction. The types of articulation, in decreasing degrees of closure, are:

#### (a) Complete closure :

(i) **Plosive** : A complete closure at some point in the vocal tract, behind which the air pressure builds up and can be released with an explosion, (e.g. /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/, /ʔ/).

(ii) **Affricate** : A complete closure at some point in the mouth, behind which an air pressure is built up; the release of the articulators is slow compared to that of a plosive, so that friction is a characteristic second element of the sound, (e.g. /tʃ/, /dʒ/).

(iii) **Nasal** : A complete closure at some point in the mouth. But the soft palate

is lowered and the air escapes through the nose. These sounds are continuants and, in the voiced form, having no noise component, (e.g. /m/, /n/, /ŋ/).

**(b) Intermittent closure :**

**Roll :** A series of intermittent closures or types made by flexible organs of speech on a firmer surface, e.g. /r/, where the tongue tip taps against the alveolar ridge.

**(c) Partial closure:**

**Lateral :** A partial closure is made at some point in the mouth, the air being allowed to escape on one or both sides of the contact. These sounds may be continuant and non-fricative, (e.g. /l/, /ɫ/), or they may be sometimes accompanied by a little friction or sometimes by considerable amount of friction.

**(d) Narrowing:**

**Fricative:** Two organs approximate to such an extent that the air passes through them with friction (e.g. /f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /h/).

**(e) Semi-vowels:**

**Semi-vowels** such as /w/, /j/ are usually included in the consonantal category on functional grounds, but from the point of phonetic description they are more properly treated as **vowel glides**.

## **7.2.1 SOUNDS MADE WITH AN INGRESSIVE AIR-STREAM**

Usually a common way of expressing surprise or pain involves the energetic inspiration of air accompanied by bilabial friction. Such sounds occur in a number of languages and in types of stammering, they are not found in normal English.

Another set of sounds, involving an ingressive air-stream, is produced entirely by means of closures within the mouth cavity, normal breathing through the nose may continue quite independently if the soft palate is lowered. Thus, the sound made to show irritation or sympathy (e.g. tut-tut) is articulated by means of a double closure, the back of the tongue against the velum and the tip, blade, and sides against the alveolar ridge and side teeth. The sounds produced are known as **clicks**. These clicks are extralinguistic in English.

## **The Classification and Description of Consonants :**

### **Plosives :**

The complete articulation of plosives, also called STOPS, consists of **three stages** :

(a) **The closing stage** : During this stage the articulating organs move together to form the obstruction.

(b) **The hold or compression stage** : During this stage the two articulators remain in contact for some time.

(c) **The release or explosion stage** : During '      stage the organs forming the obstruction part rapidly, allowing the compressed air to escape abruptly. Vocal cords may vibrate during this stage.

### **Bilabial Plosives /p/ and /b/**

During the articulation of /p/ and /b/ the soft palate is raised, thus shutting off the nasal passage. The lips are closed. Lung air is compressed behind this closure. The vocal cords are held wide apart for /p/ but in the case of articulating of /b/, the vocal cords vibrate, producing voice. Therefore /p/ is a voiceless bilabial plosive and /b/ is a voiced bilabial plosive.

### **Allophonic Variations of /p/**

(i) /p/ is aspirated, i.e. released with a strong puff of breath, when it occurs initially in stressed syllables (not necessarily word-initial. It may be word-medial, but syllable-initial). In an allophonic (i.e. narrow) transcription, the symbol used to represent this allophone is /p<sup>h</sup>/, occurs in words like:

pin, paint, point, appear, appoint, please, pray, etc.

(ii) /p/ is unaspirated when it occurs in an unstressed syllable when the preceding sound is /s/, for example:

spin, space, upper, opposite, etc.

(iii) /p/ is nasally exploded (i.e. the oral closure is retained while the velum is lowered so that the air escapes through the nose instead of through the mouth) immediately after articulating /m/, as in the word *topmost*.

(iv) When /p/ occurs finally and before another plosive or affricate, it is **not released audibly** as in words like:

cup, captain, ripe, apt, map, etc.

/b/ is articulated exactly in the same way as /p/, except that during the articulation of /b/ the vocal cords vibrate, producing voice. For example in words like boy, blow, begin, banana, etc.

**Compare /p/ and /b/ :**

|                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| post — boast      | simple — symbol |
| sopping — sobbing | cup — cub       |
| pray — bray       | rope — robe     |

**Alveolar Plosives : /t/, /d/**

/t/ — regularly spelt t, tt and sometimes th, e.g. Thames, Thomas ; also -ed in verbal past tenses and participles after a voiceless consonant, other than /t/, e.g. jumped, laughed, etc.

**Description :** To pronounce these two phonemes, the soft palate is raised and the nasal passage is shut off. The obstacle to the air-stream is formed by a closure made between the tip and rims of the tongue and the upper alveolar ridge and side teeth. Lung air is compressed behind this closure during which stage the vocal cords are wide apart for /t/, whereas for /d/ the vocal cords may vibrate. /t/ is therefore a voiceless alveolar plosive, whereas /d/ is a voiced alveolar plosive. The lip position for /t/ and /d/ is conditioned by the following vowel sound.

**Allophonic Variants :**

(i) /t/ is aspirated when it occurs initially in a stressed syllable, as in words like: toy, tin, attain, time, etc.

(ii) /t/ is unaspirated when it occurs in unstressed syllables and in stressed syllables preceded by /s/ as in words like: utter, stamp, stain, daughter, etc.

(iii) /t/ is exploded through the nose, if it is followed by /n/ as in words like: button, mutton, chutney, etc.

(iv) /t/ is released laterally when it is followed by /l/ as in words like: cattle, battle, little, etc.

/d/ is articulated exactly in the same way as /t/ but during its articulation the vocal cords vibrate, producing voice.

**Allophonic Variants :**

(i) /d/ is partially devoiced when it occurs initially in a word like **dog, dear**.



(ii) /d/ is exploded through the nose when it is followed by an /n/ as in words like: sudden, red nose, madness, etc.

(iii) /d/ is released laterally when it is followed by /l/ as in words like: riddle, paddle, middle, etc.

(iv) /d/ is **not audible** when it is in the final position, and when it is followed by another plosive or affricate, as in words like: made, build, bad boy, bed time etc.

(v) /d/ is dental when it is followed by /θ/ as in **add them**.

(vi) The past tense mark for **-ed** or **-d** is pronounced **-d** or **-ed** when the preceding sound is a voiced consonant, e.g. rubbed, bagged.

### **Compare /t/ and /d/**

|                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| town — down    | kilt — killed |
| water — warder | train — drain |
| metal — medal  | bent — bend   |

### **Velar Plosives /k/ and /g/**

/k/ may be spelt with k ; c; cc; qu; ch; as in kind, cake, accord, conquer, chemist, etc.

**Description :** During the articulation of /k/ the soft palate is raised and the nasal passage is blocked completely. The back of the tongue makes a firm contact against the soft palate thus effecting an oral closure. Lung air is compressed behind the closure. At this stage the vocal cords are wide apart. When the back of the tongue is suddenly removed from the soft palate, the compressed air escapes with an explosive sound. /k/ is thus a **voiceless velar plosive**.

### **Allophonic Variants :**

(i) /k/ is aspirated when it occurs initially in a stressed syllable, as in words like : cap, occur, come, kin, etc.

(ii) /k/ is unaspirated when it occurs in an unaccented syllable and when it is preceded by /s/ in an accented syllable. For example: uncle, practical, skin, scale, etc.

(iii) /k/ is articulated further back in the mouth when it is followed by a back vowel, e.g. call, cool, etc.

(iv) /k/ is articulated with no audible release when it is followed by another plosive, or affricate, for example: back, sack, blocked, black-bird, etc.

/g/ is articulated exactly like /k/ except that during the articulation of /g/ the vocal cords vibrate, producing voice. Therefore /g/ is a **voiced velar plosive**.

#### **Allophonic Variants :**

(i) /g/ is partially devoiced when it occurs in the initial position, e.g. good, game, give, etc.

(ii) /g/ is voiceless when it occurs in the final position, e.g. big, bug, bag, etc.

(iii) /g/ is not released audibly when it occurs in the final position followed by another plosive or affricate, for example: bagged, rugby, etc.

#### **Compare /k/ and /g/**

|             |                   |
|-------------|-------------------|
| cap — gap   | decree — degree   |
| coat — goat | stacker — stagger |
| clue — glue | hackle — haggle   |

#### **Glottal Plosive :**

In the case of the glottal plosive (stop), the obstruction to the air-stream is formed by the closure of the vocal cords, thus interrupting the flow of air into the supraglottal organs. The oral closure is effected by bringing the two vocal cords together. The air is then blocked behind the glottal closure. When the vocal cords are separated suddenly, the air-pressure below the glottis is released. The glottal stop is not a distinctive sound in English. Many native speakers use the glottal stop in their speech, e.g. in expressions like 'law and order'. [pəndədə]

#### **Affricates :**

##### **Palato-Alveolar Affricates : /tʃ/ and /dʒ/**

The term **affricate** denotes any plosive whose release stage is performed in such a way that considerable friction occurs at the point where the plosive stop is made. The friction is of short duration. The phoneme may occur in syllable initial, syllable final, word medial or word final situations.

/tʃ/ may be spelt with **ch, tch, tʃ** when /t/ is preceded by /s/. e.g. chain, batch, nature, question, etc.

**Description :** The soft palate is raised and the nasal passage is shut off. The obstacle to the air-stream is formed by a closure made between the tip, blade and

the sides of the tongue and the upper alveolar ridge and the side teeth. The front of the tongue is raised towards the hard palate in readiness for the fricative release. The closure is released slowly, and the air escapes slowly over the whole central surface of the tongue. The friction occurs between the blade, front region of the tongue and the alveolar, front palatal section of the roof of the mouth. The vocal cords are wide apart during the articulation of /tʃ/, but made vibrating for all or part of /dʒ/ according to the situation in the utterance. /tʃ/ is therefore a **voiceless palatoalveolar affricate**, and /dʒ/ is a **voiced palato-alveolar affricate**.

During the articulation of these affricates /tʃ/ and /dʒ/, there is a certain amount of lip protrusion, irrespective of the lip-position required for the articulation of the immediately following vowel. The protrusion will be more if /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ are followed by back rounded vowels, as in words like **choose, June**.

### **Allophonic Variations :**

No important allophonic variants of /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ occur except in the degree of lip-protrusion used during articulation. Both /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ can occur initially, medially and finally in words. For example: cheap, butcher, catch, jam, ledger, edge.

#### **Compare /tʃ/ and /dʒ/**

|              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| chew — jew   | chest — jest     |
| cheap — jeep | choke — joke     |
| chin — gin   | besech — beseige |

### **Nasals :**

Nasal plosives are similar to oral plosives, as in both cases, a total closure is made within the mouth. They differ from oral plosives in that the soft palate is in its lowered position, so that the air may escape through the nasal cavity, giving the sound the special nasal resonance. In nasal plosives, the active and passive articulators make a firm contact with each other, but there is a velic opening so that the air escapes freely through the nostrils. Nasal sounds are of three types : **bilabial nasal, alveolar nasal, and velar nasals**.

#### **Bilabial Nasal : /m/**

**Description :** During the articulation of /m/, the lips form a closure as for /p/ and /b/. They make a firm contact with each other, thereby shutting off the oral passage of air. The soft palate is lowered, allowing the air to escape freely through the nasal cavity. The vocal cords vibrate, producing voice. In fact all the three nasal consonants are voiced. /m/ is thus a **voiced bilabial nasal**.

### **Allophonic Variants :**

(i) /m/ is labio-dental when it is immediately followed by /f/ and /v/, as in words like: comfort, triumph, etc.

(ii) /m/ is partially devoiced when preceded by /s/, e.g. smoke, smell etc.

(iii) /m/ may be syllabic in words like **rhythm, prison** etc. that is the second syllable may not have the neutral vowel /a/.

#### **Alveolar Nasal : /n/**

**Description :** During the articulation of /n/ the tongue forms a closure with the teeth ridge and upper side teeth as for /t/ and /d/. The soft palate is lowered and the nasal passage is open, allowing the air to pass through the nostrils and adding a nasal resonance to the sound produced.

The lip position will depend upon that of adjacent vowels. The vocal cords vibrate, producing voice. Therefore /n/ is described as a **voice alveolar nasal**.

#### **Allophonic Variants :**

(i) /n/ is dental when it is followed by dental sounds like /θ/ and /ð/ as in words like **tenth** and **in there**.

(ii) /n/ is partially devoiced:

(a) When it is preceded by /s/, e.g. '**snail**'.

(b) When it is preceded by /t/, e.g. '**cotton**'.

/n/ is syllabic in words like button, cotton, sudden, etc.

#### **Velar Nasal : /ŋ/**

**Description :** During the articulation of /ŋ/, a closure is formed in the mouth between the back of the tongue and the velum or soft palate as in /k/ and /g/. The soft palate is lowered, thereby opening the nasal cavity. The lung-air escapes freely through the nostrils. The vocal cords vibrate producing voice. Therefore /ŋ/ is a **voiced velar nasal**.

#### **Allophonic Variants :**

There are no allophonic variants of /ŋ/ except with the lip position required for the preceding vowel, e.g. spread lips in the word '**sing**' and relatively open as in the word '**song**'. /ŋ/ is naturally voiced. /ŋ/ is regularly spelt with the letters '**ng**' or '**n**', e.g. sing, tongue, sink, uncle, anxious etc.

**Compare :**            /m/            /n/            /ŋ/

|      |      |      |
|------|------|------|
| ram  | ran  | rang |
| whim | win  | wing |
| dumb | done | dung |

### **Fricatives :**

Fricatives are articulated with two organs brought and held sufficiently close together so that air-stream while escaping produces strong friction. Fricatives therefore, like stops and affricates, are marked by a noise component. The vocal cords may or may not vibrate. Fricatives may be labio-dental, dental alveolar, palato-alveolar or glottal according to their places of articulation.

#### **Labio-dental fricatives : /f/ and /v/**

**Description :** The soft palate is raised and the nasal cavity is shut off. The inner surface of the lower lip makes a light contact with the edge of the upper teeth, so that the air while escaping produces friction. For /f/ vocal cords are wide apart so that the air escapes freely. The vocal cords do not vibrate. Therefore /f/ is a voiceless sound. For /v/, the vocal cords are brought together causing friction. Therefore /v/ is a **voiceless labio-dental fricative**, and /v/ is a **voiced labio-dental fricative**. /f/ is normally spelt with the letters : 'f' = fork; 'ff' = off; 'ph' = physics; 'gh' = enough. /v/ is normally spelt with letters : 'v' = voice; 'f' = of; 'ph' = nephew.

#### **Allphonic Variants :**

No important allophonic variants of /f/ occurs except those involving lip rounding, /v/ is partially voiced when it occurs initially and finally in a word, e.g. 'vine', 'leave'.

|                  |             |     |                   |
|------------------|-------------|-----|-------------------|
| <b>Compare :</b> | /f/         | and | /v/               |
|                  | fine — vine |     | surface — service |
|                  | fat — vat   |     | camphor — canvas  |
|                  | few — view  |     | leaf — leave      |

#### **Dental Fricatives : /θ/ and /ð/**

**Description :** The soft palate is raised and the nasal resonator shut off. The tip and rims of the tongue make a light contact with the edge and inner surface of the upper front teeth. The air escapes through the narrow gap between the tip of the tongue and upper front teeth causing friction. For /θ/ the vocal cords are wide apart and so the friction is voiceless; whereas for /ð/ there may be some vibration of the vocal cords producing voice. Therefore /θ/ is a **voiceless dental fricative** and /ð/ is



a **voiced dental fricative**. Both are usually spelt with the letters 'th'.

**Allophonic Variants :** There is no allophonic variant for /θ/ so it can be said to have one allophonic /θ/ which occurs in all the words in which /θ/ occurs, /ð/ on the other hand is partially voiced when it occurs initially and finally in a word as in 'then', 'soothe' etc.

**Compare :** /θ/ and /ð/

thing — thy                      mouth — mouth (v)

earthy — worthy              wreath — wreath

**Alveolar Fricatives :** /s/ and /z/

**Description :** During the articulation of /s/ and /z/ the soft palate is raised and the nasal passage is shut off. The tip and blade of the tongue make a light contact with the upper alveolar ridge, and the side rims of the tongue make a close contact with the upper side teeth. The air stream escapes through a narrow groove in the centre of the tongue causing an audible friction. For /s/ the vocal cords are kept wide apart. But for /z/ the vocal cords vibrate producing voice. Therefore —

/s/ is a **voiceless alveolar fricative**, and

/z/ is a **voiced alveolar fricative**.

**Allophonic Variants :**

There are no allophonic variants for /s/ except the ones that involve lip-rounding.

/z/ is partially voiced when it occurs initially and finally in words like **zip** and **buzz** etc. /s/ is spelt with the letters 's' = so ; 'ss' = pass ; 'c' = nice ; 'sc' = science ; 'x' (=ks) = axe. /z/ is spelt with the letters, — 's' = roses ; "ss" = scissors ; 'z' = zoo ; 'zz' = dizzy ; 'x' = exact.

**Compare :** /s/ and /z/

|             |               |              |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| seal — zeal | fussy — fuzzy | loose — lose |
| sink — zinc | peace — peas  | pence — pens |

**Palato-alveolar fricative :** /ʃ/ and /ʒ/

**Description :** During the articulation of /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ the soft palate is raised and the nasal resonator shut off. The tip and blade of the tongue are brought near the teeth ridge. At the same time, the front of the tongue is raised in the direction of the hard palate. The lung air is not forceful (as compared with that of /s/ and /z/), it

escapes through the narrow gap with an audible friction. For /ʃ/ the vocal cords are wide apart and do not vibrate, whereas for /ʒ/ there may be some vibration producing voice.

/ʃ/ is thus a **voiceless palato-alveolar fricative**, and

/ʒ/ is a **voiced palato-alveolar fricative**.

The lips may be rounded for some words, for others, lip-rounding will depend on the adjacent vowel. For example, the lips may be rounded for **shoe**, but may be somewhat neutral or spread for **'she'**. /ʃ/ is spelt with the letters **'sh'** = sheep; **'ch'** = machine; **'sch'** = schedule; **'s'** or **'ss'** before **'u'** = sure, assure; **'ti'** = nation; **'si'** = mansion; **'sci'** = conscious; **'c'** = ocean. /ʒ/ is spelt with the letters **si** = vision; **'s'** and **'z'** before **'u'** and in French loan words, e.g. measure, seizure, beige etc.

**Allophonic variants** : There are no allophonic variants of /ʃ/ and /ʒ/ apart from the degree of palatalization or lip rounding that is used.

**Compare** : /ʃ/, /tʃ/, and /ʒ/, /dʒ/

sheep — cheap

leisure — ledger

shore — chore

vision — pigeon

dish — ditch

**Glottal Fricative** : /h/

**Description** : /h/ occurs only in syllabic initial positions. The air is expelled from the lungs with considerable pressure which causes some friction in the vocal tract. The upper part of the vocal tract is shaped in readiness for the articulation of the following vowel. When the vocal cords start vibrating for the vowel, the air pressure is reduced. /h/ is therefore a **voiceless glottal fricative**. It is spelt with the letter **'h'**, **'wh'** as in **how, hat, who, when**.

/h/ occurs medially in words like **'behave', 'perhaps'**. /h/ is not pronounced initially in words like **'hour', 'honest', 'heir'** etc.

**Compare** : /h/ + vowel

heat — eat

hill — ill

hedge — edge

haul — all

hate — eight

hold — old

**Lateral** : /l/

The English lateral phoneme /l/ is an alveolar lateral.

**Description** : The soft palate is raised shutting the nasal passage. The tip of the

tongue is in contact with the upper teeth ridge, allowing the air to escape on both sides. The position of the lips depends on the nature of the adjacent vowel. For example, for 'leap', 'feel' it is spread ; for 'look', 'pool' etc. the lips are rounded.

It is usually spelt with the letters **l** = live ; **ll** = yellow.

/l/ is usually silent after a vowel sound, e.g. **talk** ; **calm**.

### **Allophonic variants :**

(i) /l/ is dental when it is followed by /θ/ as for example in 'health', 'wealth'.

(ii) /l/ becomes voiceless when it is preceded by aspirated /p/ and /k/, e.g. 'please', 'clean', etc.

(iii) /l/ is partially devoiced when it is preceded by an unaspirated voiceless plosive, or by /s/, /ʃ/, /t/, e.g. 'simply' or 'slow'.

(iv) /l/ is 'clear' or palatalized when it is followed by a vowel or /j/. The /l/ produced thus has a front vowel resonance. Clear /l/ occurs in words like 'leave', 'lad', 'million' etc.

(v) /l/ is 'dark' or velarized [ɫ] when it is word-final or followed by a consonant. The /l/ produced has a back vowel resonance. /ɫ/ occurs in words like 'tall', 'pull', 'cold', 'milk' etc.

(vi) /l/ is syllabic in words like 'kettle' 'bottle', etc. /l/ is a **voiced alveolar lateral** consonant.

### **Post Alveolar Frictionless Continuant : /r/**

**Description :** The soft palate is raised and the nasal passage is closed. The tip of the tongue is held in a position near to, but not touching the rear part of the upper teeth ridge. The back rims of the tongue touch the upper molars. The central part of the tongue is lowered with a general contraction of the tongue so that the tongue is somewhat hollowed allowing the air to escape freely without any friction. The vocal cords vibrate, producing voice. The /r/ thus articulated is a **voiced post alveolar trill**.

### **Frictionless Continuant :**

/r/ is usually spelt with the letters '**r**', '**rr**', e.g. **red**, **carry**. Also with '**wr**' = 'write'; '**rh**' = 'rhythm'

### **Allophonic Variants :**

(i) /r/ becomes a voiceless post-alveolar fricative if it is preceded by an aspirated /p/, /t/ and /k/ as in words like: **price, surprise, cry, try** etc.

(ii) /r/ is a partially devoiced post-alveolar fricative when it is preceded by a voiceless consonant as in **fry, through, shrub** etc.

(iii) /r/ is a voiced post-alveolar fricative when it is preceded by /d/, e.g. **draw, dry**, etc.

(iv) /r/ is a voiced post-alveolar tap when it occurs between two vowels or when it occurs after /θ/, e.g. **very, marry, three, thrive**, etc.

**Linking -r** : When a word ends with the letter 'r' and the next word begins with a vowel sound, and if there is no pause between the two words in connected speech, the final 'r' of the first word is pronounced. This is called **linking -r**. For example, in **butter, father, near, far** etc. particularly when these words are pronounced in isolation. But in expression like 'far away' or 'father and mother', the 'r' is pronounced — /faɪəweɪ/, /faðə ɒndmʌðə/.

**Compare** : /r/ and /l/

|                |             |                |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| raft — laughed | rush — lush | right — light  |
| pray — play    | red — led   | pirate — pilot |

**Semi-vowels** : /j/ and /w/

A semi-vowel is a rapid vocalic glide on to a syllabic sound of greater steady duration. In English the semi-vowels /j/ and /w/ glide from /i/ and /u/ respectively. The actual point at which the essential vocalic glide begins depends on the nature of the following sound.

**The Unrounded Palatal Semi-vowel** : /j/

**Description** : During the articulation of /j/ the front of the tongue takes a position of approximately /i/ with the lips spread or neutral but may anticipate the lip rounding of the following vowel as in **'you' 'yawn'** etc. The tongue moves immediately to the position of the following sound. The soft palate is raised in order to shut off the nasal passage of air. The vocal cords vibrate, producing sound. The lips are spread, but there may be anticipatory lip-rounding according to the sound that follows. Therefore /j/ is a **voiced palatal semi-vowel or approximant**.

The phoneme is spelt with the letters 'y' = yellow ; 'i' = union ; 'u' = true ; 'ew' =

strew ; 'eau' = beauty ; etc.

### **Allphonic Variants :**

(i) /j/ becomes a voiceless palatal fricative when preceded by aspirated /p/, /t/, /k/ and /h/, e.g. in words like **pure, tutor, cure, huge, humour** etc.

(ii) /j/ is partially devoiced when it is preceded by unaspirated /p/, /t/ and /k/, e.g. 'stew', 'spatula'.

### **Labio-velar semi-vowel : /w/**

**Description :** During the articulation of /w/, there is a rapid glide from the position of approximately /u/. The tongue assumes the position for this back half-close vowel and moves away immediately to the position of the following sound. The soft-palate is raised so that the nasal cavity is shut off. The lips are rounded during the articulation of /w/. The vocal cords vibrate, producing voice. Therefore, /w/ is a **voiced labio-velar semi-vowel**.

This phoneme is spelt with the letters 'w', 'wh', or 'u' after q, g as in **west, which, quick, language**, etc.

### **Allophonic Variants :**

(i) /w/ is voiceless when it is preceded by aspirated /t/ and /k/ as in words like **twig** and **quick**.

(ii) /w/ is partially devoiced when it is preceded by any other voiceless sound, e.g. **sweet, square, thwart**, etc.

Semi-vowels /j/ and /w/ occur only word-initially and word-medially as in words like **yard** and **wet, pure** and **twelve**. /j/ and /w/ never occur in the final position.

### **Compare : /j/ and /w/**

yatch — what      your — war      yet — wet      yawn — warn

## **7.2.1.1 EXERCISE**

**Exercise 1.** Say whether the following statements are **True** or **False** :

- (a) While articulating English consonants like /p/, /t/, /k/, the vocal cords vibrate.
- (b) /p/ and /b/ in English are two different phonemes.
- (c) In English /p<sup>h</sup>/ and /f/ are two different phonemes.
- (d) In English /ɪ/ and /i/ are treated as allophones of the same phoneme.



- (e) In English /t/ and /d/ belong to two different phonemes.
- (f) In English /s/ and /ʃ/ both are fricative sounds and therefore the same phoneme.
- (g) Both /v/ and /w/ are fricative sounds.
- (h) Voiced plosives are never aspirated in English.
- (i) English words [sun] and [son] constitute a minimal pair.
- (j) The front of the tongue touches the hard palate during the articulation of a clear /l/.

**Exercise 2 :** Circle the plosive consonants in the following English words. One is done for you. Give a three-term label for each (i.e. place of articulation, manner of articulation, and position of the glottis, position of the soft palate).

- (i) (p) o (t) a (t) o (ii) calender (iii) gigantic.

**Exercise 3 :** Give minimal pairs for each of the following:

/p/ and /b/ ; /m/ and /n/ ; /t/ and /v/.

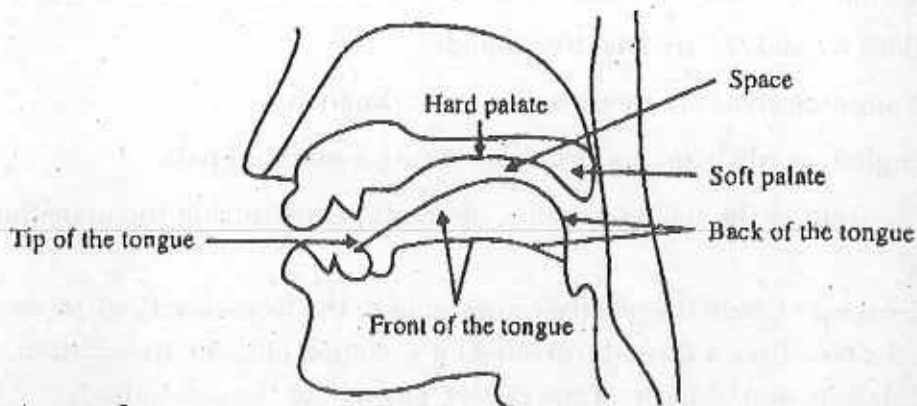
## 7.2.2 THE CLASSIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE VOWEL SOUNDS

During the articulation of vowel sounds, the lung-air escapes through the mouth without any friction. This is because during the articulation of vowels there are no obstructions in the mouth, nor is there any narrowing in the mouth to allow friction. Vowels are therefore articulated with a **stricture of open approximation**, i.e. the active articulator is raised in the direction of the passive articulator (hard palate) in such a way that there is sufficient gap between them to allow the air to escape freely and continuously, without any friction.

Study the vowel sound in **bead, bad, booed**. Each of these vowels has a distinct quality and this is because of the different positions taken up by the tongue during different vowel articulations. Therefore, it is necessary to classify vowels and describe them.

The tongue can assume a large number of positions during the articulation of vowel sounds, but the upper surface of the main body of the tongue is usually convex. This is because some parts of the tongue – the front, back or centre – is raised in the direction of the roof of the mouth so that the space between the highest point of the tongue and the roof of the mouth is wide enough for the air to escape

without any friction. Study the following diagram :



### Front vowels:

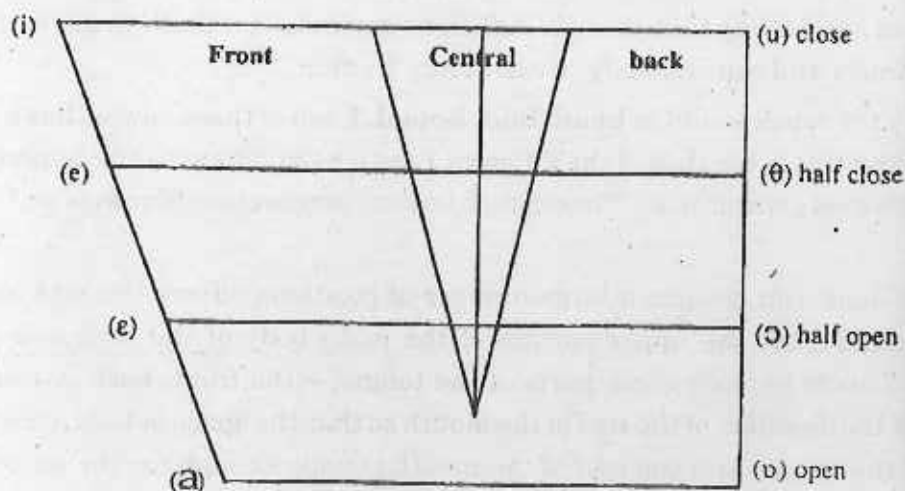
Front vowels are those during the articulation of which the front of the tongue is raised in the direction of the hard palate, e.g. in words like **bee, bid, bed, bad, bird, bard.**

### Back Vowels:

Back vowels are those during the articulation of which the back of the tongue is raised in the direction of the soft palate in such a way that there is a sufficiently wide gap between them for the air to escape without friction. The vowel sound in the following English words – **cart, cot, caught, push, and pool** are back vowels.

Vowels can be classified into **front, back** and **central**. For convenience, the tongue position is indicated in the following diagram :

### The vowel diagram : (Cardinal Vowels)



One of the methods of identifying vowel segments is provided by the system of **Cardinal Vowels (CV)**. A cardinal vowel is a fixed and unchanging reference point. A number of such reference points constitutes a system of cardinal vowels, and any vowel sound in any language can be identified by being 'placed' within the system.

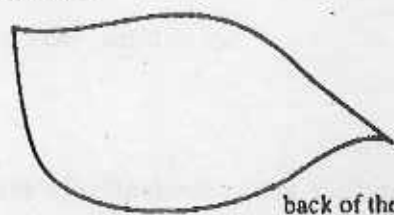
There are **eight** main cardinal vowels. They are arbitrarily selected, i.e. they are not based on the vowels of any existing language. The system is a general phonetic one.

There are limits in the mouth within which the highest point, whatever the vowel may be, must always lie. The space inside these limits is the vowel area of the mouth, bounded by its periphery on which lies the highest point of the tongue at its farthest extreme, in any direction, from the centre of the mouth. They provide points of reference as convenient as possible. The **eight** cardinal vowels selected to form Daniel Jones' system are all vowels pronounced with the highest point of the tongue lying on the periphery. They are also called peripheral vowels.

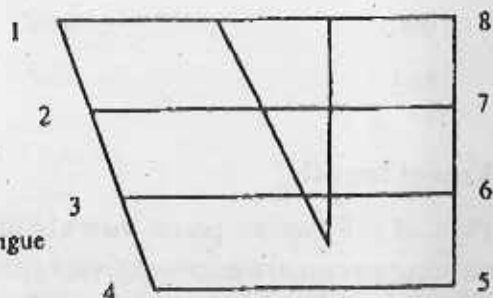
The extreme points on the periphery are /i/ and /a/. The remaining cardinal vowels hinge on these two vowels.

The total human range of vowel quality forms a continuous chain. Each vowel has been given a number. The eight cardinal vowels are eight equally-spaced auditory points.

front of the tongue



back of the tongue



### Vowels of English

In RP (educated Southern British English) there are **twenty** distinctive vowel sounds, made up of **twelve** pure vowels (monophthongs) and eight vowel glides (diphthongs), represented by the following symbols.

## Used by Daniel Jones      Used by Gimson

|    |      |                              |
|----|------|------------------------------|
| i: | /i/  | as in heed, bead etc.        |
| i  | /ɪ/  | as in hid, bid etc.          |
| e  | /e/  | as in head, bed etc.         |
| æ  | /æ/  | as in had, bad etc.          |
| a: | /ɑ/  | as in hard, bard etc.        |
| ɔ  | /ɒ/  | as in hot, bog etc.          |
| u: | /ʊ/  | as in who'd, booed etc.      |
| u  | /ʊ/  | in hood, put etc.            |
| ʌ  | /ʌ/  | as in hut, but etc.          |
| ə: | /ɜ:/ | as in heard, bird etc.       |
| ə  | /ə/  | the a's in about, above etc. |
| ei | /eɪ/ | as in hay, bay etc.          |
| aɪ | /aɪ/ | as in hide, bide etc.        |
| ɔɪ | /ɔɪ/ | as in toy, boy etc.          |
| əʊ | /əʊ/ | as in go, flow etc.          |
| iə | /iə/ | as in bow, how etc.          |
| iə | /iə/ | as in here, peer etc.        |
| uə | /ʊə/ | as in sure, poor etc.        |
| ɜə | /ɜə/ | as in bare, care etc.        |

### Vowel length

Five of the twelve **pure vowels** of English are comparatively long and the remaining **seven** are comparatively short. Apart from this, each vowel has different degrees of length. In accented syllables the so called long vowels are fully long when they are final or in a syllable closed by a voiced consonant, but they are considerably shortened when they occur in a syllable closed by a voiceless consonant. Therefore, the length of the vowel depends upon the phonetic environment in which it occurs.

For example: /i/ in **beat** is only about half as long as /i/ of **bee** or **bead**.

## Pure Vowels :

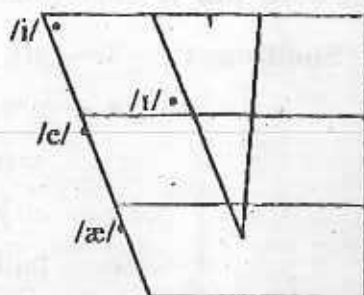
**Front Vowels :** Four of the twelve pure English vowels are front vowels and their tongue positions are indicated in the following chart.

/i/ as in beat

/ɪ/ as in bit

/e/ as in bet

/æ/ as in bat



1. /i/ – During the articulation of this vowel, the front of the tongue is raised in the direction of the hard palate to a height almost near the close position.

The tongue is tense and the lips are spread. It can be described as a **front close unrounded vowel**. This vowel can occur initially, medially and finally in words as in **eat, beat** and **bee** respectively.

/i/ is longer when it occurs finally in a word, and before voiced consonants than it is before voiceless consonants, e.g. the /i/ in 'bee' and 'bead' is longer than the /i/ in 'beat'.

**Spelling:**      **ee** — tree, cheese, canteen

**e** — complete, be, these

**ea** — leaf, reason, sea

**ie** — piece, field, chief

**ei, ey** — seize, key, receive

**i** — machine, police, prestige, suite

longer in: see, seed, seen, fee, feed, fees.

reduced in: seat, feet, piece, lease, beef, reach.

2. /ɪ/ — During the articulation of this vowel, the rear part of the front of the tongue (that is a part of the tongue that is nearer to the centre than to the front) is raised in the direction of the hard palate, just above the half-close position.

The tongue is comparatively **lax**. The lips are loosely spread.



/ɪ/ can be described as a **centralized front unrounded vowel** just above the half-close position. The vowel can occur initially, medially and finally as in words like 'it', 'bit' and 'city'.

/ɪ/ is of slightly reduced length when followed by voiceless consonants. Thus /ɪ/ in the word 'bid' is longer than the /ɪ/ in 'bit'.

**Spellings :**

- i — sit, rich, with, fifth
- e — pretty, needed, wicket, wicked,  
except, careless, houses.
- y — city, rhythm, symbol
- ie — ladies, cities
- a — private, village

(Sunday, business, women, minute, England)

**Compare :** /i/ and /ɪ/

|             |              |             |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| feel — fill | least — list | weak — wick |
| seen — sin  | reach — rich | feet — fit  |
| bead — bid  | sheep — ship | eel — ill   |

3. /e/ — During the articulation of this vowel the front of the tongue is raised in the direction of the hard palate to a height between half-close and half-open positions.

The lips are loosely spread. The tongue is more tense than it is during the articulation of /ɪ/. Therefore /e/ is a **front unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open**.

/e/ occurs initially and medially as in words like 'any', 'bed'. It does not occur finally in a word.

/e/ is slightly longer when followed by voiced consonants than it is when followed by voiceless consonants.

Thus /e/ in 'bed' and 'led' is longer than it is in 'bet', 'let' etc.

**Spelling :**

- e — set, bed, went
- ea — dead, head, breath
- a — many, Thames

(says, said, bury, Geoffrey, Leicester, friend, etc.)

**Compare : /ɪ/ and /e/**

|             |               |             |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| sit — set   | disc — desk   | rid — red   |
| tin — ten   | knit — net    | fill — fell |
| will — well | rich — wretch | hill — hell |

4. /æ/ — During the articulation of this vowel the front of the tongue is raised in the direction of the hard palate just below the half-open position.

The lips are neutrally open.

/æ/ is therefore a **front unrounded vowel just below the half-open position.**

/æ/ occurs initially, as in the word 'axe' and medially, as in the word 'bat'. But it does not occur finally in a word.

/æ/ is reduced when followed by voiceless consonants, e.g. 'bat'; 'mat', but /æ/ is longer in 'bad', 'mad'.

**Spellings :** a — sat, hand, lamp, rash, marry etc.

ai — plait, plaid

(alphabet, shall, Pall, Mall, balcony, scalp, cap, cab, bad, bat, badge, batch, back).

**Compare : /e/ and /æ/**

|             |               |             |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| pet — pat   | ten — tan     | bed — bad   |
| peck — pack | lend — land   | beg — bag   |
| said — sad  | merry — marry | mess — mass |

**Back Vowels :**

Five of the twelve pure vowels of English are back vowels. Their tongue positions are indicated in the chart given below.

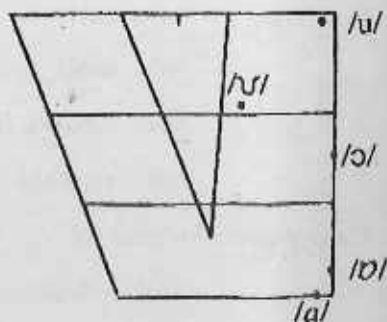
/u/ as in pool

/ʊ/ as in pull

/ə/ as in caught

/ɒ/ as in cot

/ɑ/ as in cart



5. /u/ — During the articulation of this pure vowel which is a long vowel,

the back of the tongue is raised in the direction of the soft palate to a height very near the close position. The tongue is tense. The lips are closely rounded.

/ʊ/ is therefore a **back close rounded vowel**.

/ʊ/ occurs initially as in the word 'ooze' ;

medially – as in the word 'boot' ;

finally – as in the word 'two'.

/ʊ/ is longer before voiced sounds, e.g. in words like 'shoe'; 'rude', rather than in words like 'shoot'; 'root'.

**Spelling :** oo = food, soon, moon, spoon

o = do, who, move, lose

ou = group, soup, wound(N), through

u = rude, June, Susan

(ew, ue, ui, oe = chew, blue, juice, shoe)

**Compare :** /u/ and /æ/

pool — pal          soup — sap          whom — ham

root — rat          moon — man          boot — bat

6. /ʊ/ – During the articulation of this short vowel the front part of the back of the tongue is raised in the direction of the soft palate to the height just above the half-close position. The tongue is lax. Lips are rounded.

/ʊ/ is therefore a **back rounded vowel just above the half-close position**.

/ʊ/ does not occur in the initial position in words. Medially in words like 'put'; 'sugar' and finally in a word like 'to', only in the unaccented form.

**Spelling :** 'u' = put, full, sugar, cushion, butcher

'o' = wolf, woman, bosom

'oo' = good, book, wool, wood

'ou' = could, should, would, courier

**Compare :** /ʊ/ and /u/

full — fool          pull — pool

would — wooed          hood — who'd

7. /ɔ/ — During the articulation of this relatively long vowel, the back of the tongue is raised in the direction of the soft palate between the half-open and half-close positions. The lips are rounded but less rounded than they are during the articulation of /ʊ/ and /u/. Therefore, /ɔ/ can be described as a **back rounded vowel between half-open and half-closed positions**.

/ɔ/ can occur initially as in the word 'order', medially as in the word 'cord' and finally as in the word 'law'.

**Spellings :** or — cord, horse, sword, born

aw — saw, lawn, jaw, pawn

ou, au — bought, ought, daughter, fault

a — all, talk, salt, water, war

(also : ore, oor, oar, our — before, more, door, floor, oar, board, court)

**Compare :** /ɔ/ and /e/

port — pet

hoard — head

fawned — fend

board — bed

wart — wet

dawn — den

8. /ɒ/ — During the articulation of this vowel, the back of the tongue is just above the fully open position. The jaws are wide open and the lips are slightly rounded. /ɒ/ is therefore a **back rounded vowel just above the open position**.

/ɒ/ occurs initially in words like 'ox' and medially in words like 'box'. But it does not occur in the final position.

/ɒ/ in 'cod' is slightly longer being followed by a voiced consonant than in the word 'cot' which is followed by a voiceless consonant.

**Spellings :** o — dock, dog, holiday, sorry, gone

a — was, what, swan, want, watch

ou, ow — cough, trough, knowledge, Gloucester

au — because, laurel, Austria, Australia, cauliflower

ach — yacht

**Compare :** /ɒ/ and /ɔ/

cod — cord

fond — fawned

cock — cork

what — wart

cot — court

don — dawn

9. /ɑ/ — During the articulation of this long vowel, a part of the tongue that is between the centre and the back is in a fully open position. The jaws are wide open and the lips are neutrally open. /ɑ/ is therefore a **back open unrounded vowel**.

There is a difference in length when it occurs in a syllable ending with a voiced consonant where it is longer, whereas the effect seems to be shorter when the syllable ending is a voiceless consonant. But the difference is not as marked as for other long vowels. /ɑ/ can occur initially in a word, as in 'art'; medially as in the word 'cart' and finally as in the word 'car'.

**Spelling :** a — chance, pass, after, bath, tomato, father, branch, etc.

ar — part, car, march, bar, farm etc.

ear — heart, hearth, etc.

er — clerk, sergeant, Derby, etc.

au — aunt, laugh, etc.

**Compare :** /ɑ/ and /ɒ/ ; /æ/ and /a/

cart — cot              lack — lark

part — pot             back — bark

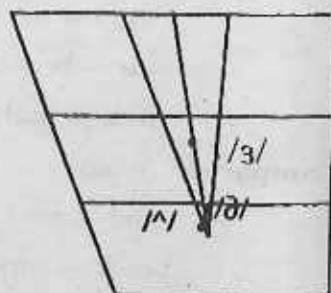
card — cod            ham — harm

### Central Vowels :

The following vowel chart will show the tongue positions of the three central or centralized vowels in English RP.

/ʌ/ as in cup ; /ɜ:/ as in bird ; and /ə/ in unaccented syllables, as in submit, banana.

10. /ʌ/ — During the articulation of this short centralized vowel, the centre of the tongue is raised in the direction of the part of the roof of the mouth that is between the hard and soft palates to a height just above the fully open position. No contact is made between the tongue and the upper molars. The jaws are wide and the lips are neutrally open. /ʌ/ can therefore be described as a **centralized unrounded vowel just above the fully open position**.





/ʌ/ occurs initially as in the word 'up' and medially as in the word 'cup'.

But it does not occur finally in a word.

/ʌ/ is slightly longer in a word before voiced consonants than before voiceless consonants.

**Spelling :** u — sun, cut, dull, etc.

o — son, come, among, one, done, month, column, monkey, nothing, Monday, onion, London etc.

ou — country, southern, couple, enough, young, etc.

oo — blood, flood, etc.

oe — does.

**Compare :** /a/ and /ʌ/ ; /ɒ/ and /ʌ/

cart — cut                  cot — cut

barn — bun                fond — fun

march — much          wander — wonder

11. /ɜ/ — During the articulation of this considerably long vowel, the centre of the tongue is raised in the direction of that part of the roof of the mouth that is between the hard and soft palates to a height between half-close and half-open positions. No firm contact is made between the tongue and upper molars. The lips are neutrally spread.

/ɜ/ is therefore a **central unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open positions.**

/ɜ/ can occur initially as in the word 'earn'.

It can occur medially as in the word 'learn' and finally as in the word 'err'.

/ɜ/ in the word 'heard' (which is followed by a voiced consonant) is longer than it is in the word 'hurt'.

**Spelling :** ir, yr — bird, first, myrtle etc.

er, err, ear — her, serve, err, earth, heard, etc.

ur, urr — turn, church, nurse, purr, etc.

**or** — word, world, work, worse etc.

**our** — journey, courtesy, scourge.

(Also : **fur**, **burn**, **urge**)

**Compare :** /ʊ/ and /ɜ/    /ʌ/ and /ɜ/

wool — whirl

bud — bird

pull — pearl

cub — curb

full — fir

such — search

hood — heard

bust — burst

ton — turn

12. /ə/ - This non-final /ə/ has a very high frequency of occurrence in unstressed (unaccented) syllables. It has the same articulatory description as /ɜ/. The only difference between /ə/ and /ɜ/ in the non-final position is one of length. In the final position, the centre of the tongue is raised in the direction of the mid-point between the hard and soft palates to a height just below the half-open position. Its quality is that of a central vowel with neutral lip position.

/ə/ is therefore a **central unrounded vowel just below the half-open position**.

/ə/ is the most frequently occurring vowel in the English RP. It can occur initially in a word as in the word 'about'. It can occur medially, as in the word 'forget' and finally as in the word 'tailor'.

/ə/ occurs commonly in the weak forms of many words, e.g. a, an, the, to, her, for etc.

/ə/ does not occur in accented/stressed syllables.

**Spellings :** i — possible

a — woman

e — gentlemen

o — oblige

u — suppose

ure — figure

er — mother

ar — particular

ou — famous

or — doctor

our — colour

### 7.2.3 DIPHTHONGS OR VOWEL GLIDES

There are eight vowel glides or diphthongs in the English RP. These are vowel sequences within one syllable. They may be said to have a **first** element (the starting point) and a **second** element (the point in the direction of which the glide is made). The RP diphthongs have as their first element sounds like /ɪ/, /ə/, /a/ and for their second element /ɪ/, /ʊ/, /ə/.

#### Diphthongs gliding towards /ɪ/ :

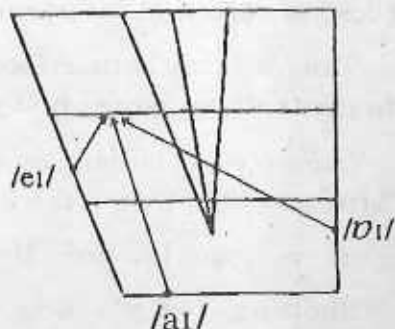
There are **three** diphthongs gliding towards /ɪ/. The tongue positions of these diphthongs are shown in the vowel chart below.

The dot represents the starting point and the arrow indicates the direction in which the glide moves.

/eɪ/ as in the word 'they'.

/aɪ/ as in the word 'my'.

/ɔɪ/ as in the word 'boy'.



1. /eɪ/ – During the articulation of this diphthong, the glide begins from a point slightly below the half-close front position, and moves in the direction of RP /ɪ/. The lips are spread. Therefore the diphthong may be described as a **glide from a front unrounded vowel just below the half-close to a centralized front unrounded vowel just above the half-close position**.

/eɪ/ can occur initially as in the word 'aim'. It can occur medially as in the word 'pain' and finally as in the word 'play'.

Diphthongs are considerably longer in case of word final position and also when it is followed by voiced consonants. When a diphthong is long, it is the first element that is lengthened. The second element of the diphthong is very short. Such diphthongs are called falling diphthongs. For example, the diphthong /eɪ/ in 'play' (word final) and 'plays' (which is followed by a voiced consonant) is longer than it is in the word 'place' (which is followed by a voiceless consonant).

**Spelling :** a — ape, late, lady, waste, base, etc.

ai, ay — day, may, waist, rail, aim, etc.

ei, ey — eight, veil, weigh, rein, they, etc.

ea — great, break, steak etc.

**Compare :** /e/ and /ei/

|             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| get — gate  | lead — laid    |
| pen — pain  | chest — chased |
| less — lace | fell — fail    |
| red — raid  | sent — saint.  |

2. /aɪ/ — During the articulation of this diphthong the glide is slightly behind the front open position and moves in the direction of R.P /ɪ/. The lips are neutral and then they become loosely spread. The jaw is wide open at the beginning and becomes narrow at the second element.

Thus /aɪ/ may be described as a **glide from a front open unrounded vowel to centralized vowel just above the half-close position.**

/aɪ/ can occur initially as in the word 'ice'. It can occur medially as in the word 'bite' and finally as in the word 'buy'.

/aɪ/ is longer in words 'buy', 'bide' as it is followed by a voiced consonant.

**Spellings :** i, y — time, write, bite, climb, cry, dry, etc.

igh, eigh — high, light, fight, might, height, etc.

ie, ye — die, lie, tried, dye, tie, etc.

ei, ai — either, eider, aisle, etc.

eye — eyes.

**Compare :** /eɪ/ and /aɪ/

|               |              |              |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| May — my      | layer — lair | tape — type  |
| mail — mile   | late — light | hay — high   |
| waves — wives | fate — fight | wade — wide  |
| tame — time   | raise — rise | race — rice. |

3. /ɔɪ/ — During the articulation of this diphthong, the glide begins at a point between the back half-open and open positions and moves in the direction of /ɪ/. The jaw is slightly wide in the beginning and loosely spread towards the end. The lips are open rounded for the first element, changing to neutral for the second element. Therefore /ɔɪ/ may be described as a **glide from a back rounded vowel between open and half-open to a centralized front unrounded vowel just above the half-close position.**

/ɔɪ/ can occur initially in a word such as 'oil'. It can occur medially as in the word 'boil', and finally as in 'boy'.

/ɔɪ/ is longer in words like 'boy', 'coin', 'voice'.

**Spellings :** oi, oy — boy, toy, noise, voice, boil, point, buoy, soil, coil, void, choice, etc.

**Compare :** /aɪ/ and /ɔɪ/

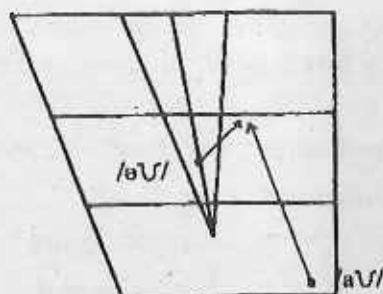
|             |            |                |
|-------------|------------|----------------|
| file — foil | tie — toy  | line — loin    |
| tile — toil | buy — boy  | liar — lawyer  |
| kine — coin | isle — oil | imply — employ |

#### **Diphthong gliding towards /ʊ/ :**

There are two diphthongs gliding towards RP /ʊ/. The tongue position of these are shown in the following vowel chart :

/əʊ/ as in 'old' ;

/aʊ/ as in 'sound' ;



4. /əʊ/ — Here the glide begins at a central position, between half-close and half-open positions and moves in the direction of RP /ʊ/. The lips are neutral in the beginning, and are rounded during the articulation of the second element. There is a slight closing movement of the lower jaw. The starting point may have a tongue position similar to that described for /ɜ/. /əʊ/ therefore can be described as a **glide from a central unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open, to a centralized back rounded vowel just above the half-close position.**

/əʊ/ can occur initially as in the word 'over'. It can occur medially as in 'boat' and finally as in the word 'go'.

It is longer in word final position as in the word 'no' and in words where it is followed by a voiced consonant as in the word 'nose'.

**Spelling :** o — so, old, home, both, folk, etc.



**oa** — oak, road, foal, toast, soap, etc.

**oe** — toe, doe, sloe, foe, hoe, etc.

**ou, ow** — soul, though, shoulder, know, blow, etc.

(also : mauve, broach, beau, sew, shew, don't, won't, etc.)

**Compare :** /ə/ and /əʊ/

saw — so

born — bone

walk — woke

hall — hole

torn — tone

nor — no

call — coal

bought — boat

more — mow

law — low

pause — pose

raw — row

5. /aʊ/ — During the articulation of this diphthong, the glide begins at a point between the back open unrounded position and moves in the direction of RP /ʊ/. The lips are neutral in the beginning and weakly rounded towards the end.

/aʊ/ occurs initially in words as in the word 'out'. It can occur medially as in the word 'bout', and finally in a word as in 'cow'.

Like all vowels/diphthongs, it is longer when it occurs in a word final position and before voiced consonants. For example, in words like : how, loud, town, cows, etc.

**Spellings :** 'ou', 'ow' — house, sound, out, cow, etc.

**Compare :** /ʌ/ and /aʊ/

fund — found

done — down

but — bowed

none — noun

hull — howl

guns — gowns

buzz — bows

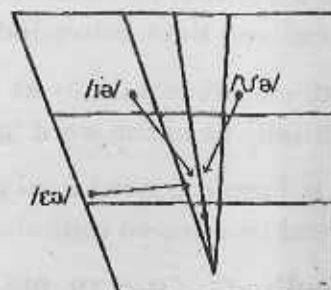
**Diphthongs gliding towards /ə/ :**

These are called centring diphthongs. There are **three** such diphthongs in English RP. The tongue positions of these diphthongs are shown in the following vowel chart:

/tʃeə/ as in 'cheer'

/tʃeə/ as in 'chair'

/pʊə/ as in 'poor'



6. /ɪə/ — During the articulation of this diphthong, the glide begins with a tongue position approximately similar to that of RP /ɪ/ and moves in the direction of the more open variety of /ə/ when /ɪə/ is final in the word. In non-final position, e.g. **fierce, beard**, the glide may not be so extensive. The lips are neutral throughout, with a slight movement from spread to open. Therefore, /ɪə/ may be described as a **glide from the centralized front unrounded vowel just above half-close to a central unrounded vowel just below half-open**.

/ɪə/ can occur initially as in the word 'earring'. It can occur medially as in 'fierce', and finally as in **fear**.

/ɪə/ is longer in words like **fear, fears**, etc. before voiced consonants. In unaccented syllables, the first element becomes weaker, e.g. 'period', 'serious'.

Such diphthongs with a strong second element are called **rising diphthongs** and where the first element is stronger, they are called **falling diphthongs**.

**Spellings :** eer, ear, ere — deer, tear, dear, here, year,  
 eir, ier, ir — weird, fierce, fakir, pierce,  
 ea, ia, eu, eo — idea, Ian, museum, theological,  
 e — hero,  
 ea — real, beard,  
 eer — cheer.

**Compare :** /ɪ/ and /ɪə/

|               |              |            |
|---------------|--------------|------------|
| rill — real   | bid — beard  | pin — peon |
| quiz — queers | his — hears  | is — ears  |
| lid — leered  | rid — reared |            |

7. /ɛə/ — The glide of this diphthong begins in the half-open front position and moves in the direction of the more open variety of /ə/, specially when the diphthong is final. When /ɛə/ occurs in a syllable closed by a consonant, the /ə/ element tends to be of a mild /ə/ type. The lips are neutral throughout.

/ɛə/ is therefore a **glide from a front half-open unrounded vowel to a central unrounded vowel between half-open and half-close if the diphthong is non-final**.

If the diphthong is final, the second element is a central unrounded vowel just below the half-open position.

/ɛə/ can occur initially in a word such as 'aeroplane'. It can occur medially as in the word 'careful' and finally as in 'care'.

/ɛə/ is longer in 'care', 'seares'.

**Spelling :** are — care, rare, share, mare, etc.

air — air, fair, pair, chair, etc.

ear — bear, pear, tear (v) etc.

eir — heir,

ere — there, and 'ar' — scarce.

**Compare :** /æ/ and /ɛə/

marry — Mary      bad — bared      callous — careless

rally — rarely      dad — dared      glad — glared

pad — paired      add — aired      fad — fared

8. /ʊə/ — During the articulation of this diphthong, the glide starts from a tongue position similar to that used for /ʊ/ and moves towards the more open type of /ə/ which forms the end-point of all three centring diphthongs with, again, more or less a closer variety of /ə/ when the diphthong occurs in a closed syllable.

The lips are weakly rounded in the beginning and are spread towards the end. /ʊə/ is therefore a glide from a centralized back rounded vowel just above half-close to a central unrounded vowel between half-close and half-open.

/ʊə/ does not occur initially in a word. It can occur medially as in the word 'during' and finally as in the word 'cure'.

**Spelling :** oor — poor, moor.

ure — pure, endure, cure, sure.

ewer — sewer.

our — tour, gourd, dour.

(also in : jewel, fluent, truant)

**Compare :** /u/ and /ʊə/

too — tour      cue — cure

do — doer      you — you're

few — fewer      sue — sewer

### Diphthong /ə/ :

Diphthongal glides of RP, namely /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /əʊ/ and /aʊ/ are **falling** (i.e. with length and stress on the first element) and **closing** (i.e. gliding from a more open to a closer position). Diphthongs other than those that glide in the direction of /ə/ may be followed by /ə/ within a word, either as an inseparable part of the word, e.g. **fire**, **hire**, **Noah**, **choir**, **society**, **our**, **sour**, **towel**, **tower** (i.e. /faɪə/, /haɪə/, /nəʊə/ ; /kwaɪə/ ; /səsaɪətɪ/ ; aʊə/ ; saʊə/ ; /taʊəl/ ; /taʊə/ ; or /ə/ may appear as a suffix (morpheme) appended to the root, e.g. **greier**, **player**, **slower**, **mower**, **higher**, **employer**, **drier** [i.e. /greɪə/, /pleɪə/, /sləʊə/, /məʊə/ ; /haɪə/ ; /ɪmplɪə/ ; /draɪə/] or /ə/ may sometimes appear as a separable element internal in a composite word, e.g. **now-a-days** i.e. /naʊədəɪz/.

In slow speech, the final /ə/ is heard, but in a speedy communication, in such sequences, the second element of the diphthong (i.e. the /ɪ/ or /ʊ/) is often omitted, e.g. it may be noticed that often /eɪə/ in a word like **player** is heard as /ple:ə/ ; /aɪə/ in a word like **higher** is heard as /ha:ə/ and /aʊə/ in a word like **shower** is heard as /ʃa:ə/.

#### 3.2.4 Exercise

##### 1. Try to pronounce the following words:

tyre, trial, quiet, coward, buyer, flyer, iron, ours, tower, towel, tired, powerful, bower, flower, riot, showery.

##### The less common sequences:

greier, grower, employer, player, thrower, royal, betrayal, followers, lawyers.

##### 2. Practice:

|               |                |                 |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| grey — greyan | high — higher  | lays — layers   |
| gay — gayer   | my — mire      | lies — liars    |
| mow — mower   | why — wire     | boughs — bowers |
| low — lower   | saw (N) — sour | tied — tired    |
| sow — sower   | coy — coir     | hide — hired    |

##### 3. Complete the following minimal pairs of words:

|             |            |            |             |
|-------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| /e/ — /ɛə/  | /æ/ — /ɛə/ | /ɔ/ — /əʊ/ | /eɪ/ — /aʊ/ |
| very — vary | rally —    | cork —     | hay — how   |

|          |           |          |   |   |
|----------|-----------|----------|---|---|
| merry —  | marry —   | walk —   | — | — |
| ferry —  | pad —     | cord —   | — | — |
| terror — | bad —     | roared — | — | — |
| dead —   | dad —     | ball —   | — | — |
| shed —   | callous — | call —   | — | — |
| fed —    | glad —    | fall —   | — | — |

4. Fill in appropriate vowels to complete the following words :

1. r — b (rob) ;      r — b (rib) ;      r — b (rub) ;
2. p — tʃ (patch) ;      p — tʃ (pitch) ;      p — tʃ (porch) ;
3. f — l (feel) ;      f — l (fell) ;      f — l (full) ;
4. s — k (sick) ;      s — k (sock) ;      s — k (sack) ;
5. r — d (read) ;      r — d (red) ;      r — d (reared) ;
6. w — v (weave) ;      w — v (wove) ;      w — v (wave) ;
7. dʒ — (jar) ;      dʒ — (jaw) ;      dʒ — (jew) ;
8. b — (buy) ;      b — (boy) ;      b — (bow) ;
9. θr — (three) ;      θr — (threw) ;      θr — (throw) ;
10. ð — (thy) ;      ð — (though) ;      ð — (thou) ;

5. Fill in appropriate consonants to form the words :

1. (— ɪ —) = chick ;      (— ɔ —) = chalk ;
2. (— æ —) = jam ;      (— ɪ —) = Jim ;
3. (— i —) = treat ;      (— aʊ —) = trout ;
4. (— aʊ —) = frowned ;      (— e —) = friend ;
5. (— u —) = tooth ;      (— u —) = booth ;
6. (— a —) = dart ;      (— eɪ —) = date ;
7. (— eɪ —) = face ;      (— i —) = zeal ;
8. (— ʊ —) = push ;      (— ɒ —) = posh ;



## 7.3 SUPRASEGMENTAL FEATURES

Some features of phonology go beyond the study of segments, and phonemic contrast alone cannot explain all the contrasts in the language. For example, the same word in English can be pronounced with the first syllable sounding stronger, or the second syllable sounding stronger – e.g. **content** or **content**. The first is heard as a noun, the second as a verb. Changes in intonation can also bring about a change in the message. There are contrasts that extend beyond one segment or phoneme and are called **suprasegmental**. The term is most commonly applied to **stress, tone, pitch** (i.e. intonation).

### Stress and intonation :

To describe and compare the pronunciation of different languages, we must analyse speech, i.e. we must split up into units the unbroken stream of movements resulting in an utterance.

What would be the smallest unit for an utterance ?

A **syllable** is the minimum unit of an utterance. Nothing less than a syllable can be uttered or pronounced, e.g. *shh ! hmm ! ah !*

Is it necessary that all syllables be accompanied by sound?

The answer is **No**. It is possible to produce inaudible syllables, e.g. a rather perfunctory way of saying 'Thank you' = 'kyou'.

A syllable has three phases with which segments may coincide, i.e. a **central segment** (associated with phase 2). There may or may not be marginal segments associated with 1 (**releasing phase**) or 3 (**arresting phase**).

The following chart will give you a clear idea.

| Phase : | (1) | (2) | (3) | Syllable pattern : |   |   |
|---------|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|---|---|
| x       | oh  | x   | →   | x                  | v | x |
| g       | o   | x   | →   | c                  | v | x |
| x       | oa  | t   | →   | x                  | v | c |
| g       | oa  | t   | →   | c                  | v | c |

What do you find common in a syllable? The answer would be the vowel sound, as shown in phase 2.

**Definition of a syllable :** A syllable is a unit of an utterance containing one and only one vowel either alone or surrounded by consonants.

In English, the vowel of the syllable may be preceded by upto **three** consonants and followed by as many as **four** consonants. The pattern can be as follows:

(i) The vowel may appear alone = xv x

(ii) It may have 1/2/3 consonants before it. = 1 | 2 | 3

|     |   |               |
|-----|---|---------------|
| p   | a | t = c v x     |
| sp  | a | t = c c v x   |
| spr | a | t = c c c v x |

(iii) It may have 1/2/3/4 consonants after it. = 1 | 2 | 3

|   |   |                    |
|---|---|--------------------|
| t | e | k = c v c          |
| t | e | ks = c v c c       |
| t | e | kst = c v c c c    |
| t | e | ksts = c v c c c c |

### Syllable Pattern in English:

(a) When there is no arresting phase in a syllable, it is an open syllable.

(b) When there is an arresting phase, it is a closed syllable.

### Exercise : Unit review questions:

How many syllables are there in the following words. Write the number in the brackets given:

opportunity (5); consonants ( ); alphabet ( );

authority ( ); laboratory ( ); phonology ( ).

**Note:** A sequence of two or more consonants at the beginning or end of a syllable is called a **consonant cluster**. In other words, the sequence of consonants will have to form part of the same syllable if it has to be considered a consonant cluster.

### Examples of consonant clusters :

1. /pl — / as in the word **please**.

/tr — / as in the word **train**.

2. /spl — / as in the word '**splendid**'.

/skw — / as in the word '**square**'.

3. / — ns/ as in the word '**dance**'.

/ — gz/ as in the word '**dogs**'.

4. / — kst/ as in the word 'next'.

/ — lst/ as in the word 'whilst'.

5. / — ksθs/ as in the word 'sixths'.

/ — lfθs/ as in the word 'twelfths'.

English is a **stress-timed language**, i.e. in connected speech, all important syllables are stressed. **Stress** means – **accent / emphasis / force or pressure**. **Word stress** therefore means – emphasis or force on a particular syllable in a word which stands out in an utterance carrying the meaning, particularly when the word contains more than one syllable. The degree of force on other syllables in the word is less. It is difficult to distinguish the degrees of force on each syllable.

Therefore, it is enough to consider only three degrees of force:

(i) **Primary** — (strong, main, principal) greater degree of force.

(ii) **Secondary** — (half-strong, medium) relatively lesser degree of force.

(iii) **Weak or unstressed** — are uttered very rapidly and usually undergo some obscuration of their quality.

(a) The **primary stress** is marked by placing a vertical bar above and immediately before the syllable, e.g. 'father, a'bove.

(b) When the word contains a number of syllables, (specially in the case of derivatives) it becomes necessary to show a **secondary stress** with a vertical bar just below and in front of the syllable, e.g. ex,ami'nation; 'organize — ,organi'zation; E'urope — ,Europ'ean.

(c) Other syllables are considered to be **unstressed** and show (◡) mark on the syllable in some dictionaries, e.g. 'fathēr.

(d) In connected speech, stress will depend on its relative importance in the sentence.

i.e. It may retain its stress and tone.

It may lose the tone but not the stress.

The stress may be reduced to a subordinate one,

Or it may disappear altogether.

e.g. (a) lexical stress: — a'bout.

(b) full kinetic stress: — (tonic stress) : He was w'alking a'bout.

(c) full static stress: — It's 'about what I 'wanted.

(d) complete loss of stress: — It's about a m'ile.

The fundamental patterns of English stressing is irregular and confusing because two different stress principles are involved in the language.

(a) The Tutoic stress pattern, i.e. stress on the root syllable, e.g. 'love, 'lovely, 'lovable.

(b) The Romanic stress pattern, i.e. stress based on the quality – stress attracted towards end of the word, e.g. égal, equality, equalization.

Yet there is a regularity in the irregularity. It is possible to draw up rules showing how suffixes and prefixes influence stress, subject to remarkably few exceptions.

### 7.3.1 STRESS IN ENGLISH — SOME RULES AND THEIR EXCEPTIONS

Words with more than one syllable have a stress on at least one of the syllables, and perhaps on two.

There are some rules which can often help to indicate where to put the stress, but sometimes the only way of being sure is to look each word up in the dictionary.

Here are some rules:

Study the following disyllabic words and notice where the stress is in each word:

#### Nouns (N) & Adjectives (Adj)

'conduct

'convict

'object

'permit

#### Verbs (V)

con'duct

con'vict

ob'ject

pro'gress

1. We can form a rule here by saying that in disyllabic words, stress falls on the **first syllable** when the word is a **noun or an adjective**, whereas stress falls on the **second syllable** when it is a **verb**.

But there are exceptions to the rule

'answer (both N/V) ; 'echo (N/V) ; ce'ment (N/V) ;

'purchase (N/V) ; re'port (N/V) ; 'promise (N/V)

(You can think of some more similar examples.)

2. Study the stress pattern in the following words:

a'broad, a'cross, a'part, con'cern, be'tween, ad'mit, a'loud,  
com'pose, be'low, re'pair, re'tire, am'ount, a'ttend, de'fend.

You will find that in such disyllabic words, the weak prefixes (such as a-, be-, com-, con-, de-, re-) do not take any stress. Hence the stress falls on the root word.

3. Now look at the following words and see where the stress is:

de'cide, dic'tate, ac'cept, ad'mit, vi'brate, cap'size, en'joy, ex'plain, imp'rove, su'ggest, ob'serve, per'form, pre'pare, re'fer, a'fford, na'rrate, se'lect, be'long.

All these words are verbs. So the rule could be: Verbs of two syllables are normally stressed on the second syllable.

**Exceptions:** 'order, 'cancel, 'govern, 'practise, 'enter, 'study, 'open, 'suffer, etc.

(You can think of more such examples.)

4. (a) Words with inflectional suffixes such as -es, -ing, -ed, in words like matches, beginning, the stress falls on the root word and not on the suffix.

(b) Some derivational suffixes also behave in the same manner. Study the following derivational suffixes with one example of word for each:

|                     |                      |                      |                       |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| —en<br>'broaden     | —age<br>'breakage    | —ance<br>a'ppearance | —er<br>'broader       | —ess<br>'goddess     |
| —full<br>'careful   | —ify<br>'classify    | —hood<br>'childhood  | —ice<br>'cowardice    | —ish<br>'foolish     |
| —ive<br>a'ttractive | —less<br>'aimless    | —ly<br>'badly        | —ment<br>'appointment | —ness<br>'bitterness |
| —or<br>'conqueror   | —ship<br>'fellowship | —ter<br>'laughter    | —ure<br>'enclosure    | —y<br>'bloody        |
| —zen<br>'citizen    | —dom<br>'freedom     |                      |                       |                      |

(You will find that the stress falls on the root word and not on the suffix.)



5. The following endings of words, cause the stress to fall on the last syllable.

| Word ending    |   | example                     |
|----------------|---|-----------------------------|
| —ain (verbs)   | = | ascer'tain, a'ttain         |
| —ee (in nouns) | = | addres'see, refu'gee        |
| —eer           | = | auction'eer, car'eer        |
| —esque         | = | gro'tesque, pictu'resque    |
| —ique          | = | ob'lique, tech'nique        |
| —oon           | = | ba'lloon, car'toon          |
| —aire          | = | millio'naire, questio'naire |
| —ese           | = | Assa'mese, Chi'nese         |
| —ette          | = | gaz'ette, cigar'ette        |

6. The following endings normally cause the stress to fall on the previous syllable:

|                     |   |                                         |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------------------------|
| —ion (tion/-sion)   | = | pro'motion, inv'asion                   |
| —ian                | = | li'brarian, mus'ician                   |
| —ious (-eous/-uous) | = | cerem'onious, misce'llaneous            |
| —ie                 | } | = dram'atic, dram'atical, dram'atically |
| —ical               |   |                                         |
| —ically             |   |                                         |

**Important exceptions are :**

'Arabic, 'Catholic, ar'ithmetic, 'rhetoric, 'politic(s), 'choleric, etc.

(You can think of more examples.)

|        |   |                                                        |
|--------|---|--------------------------------------------------------|
| —it    | } | = dep'osit, curio'sity, a'ttitude (exception 'deficit) |
| —ity   |   |                                                        |
| —itude |   |                                                        |

(You can think of more examples.)

|         |   |                         |
|---------|---|-------------------------|
| —ify    | = | 'modify, 'specify       |
| —ular   | = | par'ticular, mo'lecular |
| —iate   | = | im'mediate, a'lleviate  |
| —cracy  | = | dem'ocracy, au'tocracy  |
| —graphy |   |                         |

|           |   |   |                                             |
|-----------|---|---|---------------------------------------------|
| —grapher  | } | = | pho'tography, pho'tographer, pho'tographist |
| —graphist |   |   |                                             |
| —logy     | } | = | bio'logy, bio'logist                        |
| —loger    |   |   |                                             |
| —logist   |   |   |                                             |
| —sophy    |   |   |                                             |
| —sopher   | } | = | phi'losophy, phi'losopher                   |
| —sophist  |   |   |                                             |
| —nomy     | } | = | a'stronomy, a'stronomer                     |
| —nomer    |   |   |                                             |
| —nomist   |   |   |                                             |
| —able     |   |   |                                             |
|           |   |   | = p'alpable, w'orkable, con'vertable        |

7. The following endings normally cause the stress to fall on the **third** syllable from ending, e.g. '—ate = e'<sub>1</sub> | xa<sub>2</sub> | gg<sub>3</sub> e | rate<sub>4</sub>

'—ate = 'fortunate, 'educate, 'cultivate, ac'celerate

'—graph = 'paragraph, 'autograph

'—gram = 'telegram, 'diagram

8. For endings such as —ise or —ize, the stress depends on the number of syllables in the word, e.g..

- (a) If the word contains **four** syllables, then the stress normally falls on the **third** syllable from the ending.

**Example :** 'au | tho | rize, 'criticize, ac'climatize.

- (b) If the word contains **more than four** syllables, then the stress normally falls on the **fourth** syllable from the ending.

**Example :** A | m'e | ir | ca | nize, rep'ublicanize, le'gitimize.

9. In the case of endings such as : (—al, —ant, —ent, —ous), the stress depends on whether the syllable preceding the ending is **open** or **closed**.

- (a) If the preceding syllable is **open**, then the stress normally falls on the **third** syllable from the ending.

**Example :** a'd | mi | ral

- (b) If the preceding syllable is **closed**, then the stress normally falls on the

second syllable from the ending.

Example : an | 'ces | tral

Some more examples :

— al = 'medical, me'dicinal, o'riginal

(but → au'tumnal, govern'mental)

— ant = 'accident, 'evident, 'tolerant, 'violent

— ent = (but → a'bundant, in'cessant, tri'umphant)

(Exceptions : co'herent, ante'cedent, etc.)

— ous = 'decorous, 'numerous, pre'posterous

(but → mo'mentous, trem'endous)

(Exceptions : des'irous, son'orous, etc.)

One could frame a long list of rules. But one must also learn to accept the enormously long list of exceptions to the rules. We can learn these exceptions simply by listening and imitating.

#### 10. re- prefix :

In pronouncing the re- prefix, three different vowel sounds are used, e.g. |ri|, |rɪ|, |re|.

The choice between these three pronunciations depends upon the stress context.

Example : r'ebel (N) / r'ebəl / re'bel (V) / rɪbel/ ; reborn = /'ri:b'ɔ:n/

re = |re|

'rebel, 'recipe, 'recognize, 'reconcile, 'record (N), 'recreate (=amuse), 'reference, 'refuse (N), 'refuge, 'relative, 'relevant, 'relic, 'relish, 'remedy, 'remnant, 'renovate, 'replica, 'reptile, 'requisite, 'rescue, 'residence, 'resolute, 'restaurant, 'revenue, 'reverence, 'reverend, etc.

| rɪ- | and | ri- |

| ri- |

| ri- |

re'act = to respond

re'call = remember

re'count = relate

,re'act = act again

,re'call = call again

,re'-count = count again

|              |            |           |               |
|--------------|------------|-----------|---------------|
| re'cover     | = get back | ,re'cover | = cover again |
| re'dress (N) | = remedy   | ,re'dress | = dress again |
| re'form (N)  | = improve  | ,re'form  | = form again  |
| re'lease (N) | = free     | ,re'place | = place again |

In the following words, there is also a change in the pronunciation of 's' which is pronounced as [z].

e.g. /rez3v/

|              |              |            |               |
|--------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| re'serve     | = keep back  | ,re-'serve | = serve again |
| re'solve (N) | = decide     | ,re-'sign  | = sign again  |
| re'sort (N)  | = turn to    | ,re-'solve | = solve again |
| re'sound     | = echo       | ,re-'sound | = sound again |
| re'sign      | = relinquish | ,re-'sort  | = sort again  |

### Exercise : Unit review questions:

1. Divide the following words into a number of syllables and write the number in the brackets given. (One is done for you):

opportunity (5); consonants ( ); alphabet ( );  
 authority ( ); laboratory ( ); phonology ( )

2. Study the rules and put in the stress marks:

|           |          |             |             |
|-----------|----------|-------------|-------------|
| beautiful | govern   | glorify     | appointment |
| monsoon   | unique   | childish    | mountaineer |
| ending    | recorded | subject (N) | scholarship |
| watches   | promise  | careless    | wastage     |
| shorten   | prevent  | desert (V)  | contentment |

3. Put in the primary stress in the following words:

|               |            |           |             |
|---------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| proportionate | grammarian | economize | electricity |
| questioner    | vernacular | geography | photograph  |
| beautify      | pension    | revision  | practical   |

4. In each row of words, one word has stress on a different syllable. Underline that word.

|                 |            |             |           |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| (i) college     | programme  | compose     | authors   |
| (ii) punish     | July       | danger      | captain   |
| (iii) ticket    | people     | final       | goodbye   |
| (iv) machine    | canteen    | luggage     | select    |
| (v) reserve     | injure     | insane      | express   |
| (vi) question   | apply      | perceive    | perform   |
| (vii) future    | liquid     | teacher     | intend    |
| (viii) mechanic | director   | customer    | election  |
| (ix) cigarette  | guarantee  | seventeen   | modify    |
| (x) delightful  | disbelieve | disturbance | effective |

### Compound Words :

Two or more independent words are combined to form a compound. In spelling them there may or may not be any hyphen between the two elements forming the compound.

There are a number of collocations. In most compound words in English the primary stress falls on one of the elements. The most common type in English is the first of the two elements receiving the primary stress.

Here are a few examples of some very frequent collocations:

1. N + N = 'kitchen garden
2. n + N-er/N-or (**Nomen Agentis**) i.e. nouns formed from verbs = 'house ,keeper
3. N + Gerund = 'fault ,finding
4. Adjective + N = 'red ,rose
5. -ing form + N = 'eating ,house

As you will see that compounds that are single-stressed on the first component are very common in English, e.g. 'fountain ,pen, whereas some compounds are double-stressed, i.e. the first component takes a full stress and the second component takes a kinetic stress in some compound, e.g. 'rock 'salt. Most of the double stressed compounds are adjusted according to rhythmical variation.

The following are a few rules for using stress in compound words, but all rules have exceptions as well.



1. N + N = (i) **Double stressed** if the compound **names** something made out of or containing the first component, e.g. 'mutton 'chop, 'olive 'oil, 'milk 'pudding, 'arm 'chair, etc.
- (ii) **Single stressed** if it **does not name** something made out of or containing the first component, e.g. 'rock ,plant ; 'fish ,market; 'dust ,bin ; 'fountain ,pen, etc.

2. N + N-er/N-or =

- (i) When the first component **names the object of the action**, the compound is invariably **single stressed**, i.e. 'cabinet ,maker; 'road ,mender; 'squadron ,leader, etc.
- (ii) When the first component does not name the object of action, then the compound is double stressed. There are few such example:
- e.g. 'stage 'manager = (does not manage stage)  
 'town 'crier = does not cry town  
 'vacuum 'cleaner = does not clean vacuum, etc.

3. N + Gerund :

- (i) When **the first component has a predicative function** towards the gerund, then the compound is single stressed. The resulting compound may be a noun or an adjective, e.g. 'alms ,giving; 'blood ,poisoning ; 'sight ,seeing; 'time ,serving. etc.
- (ii) When the **first component has an attributive function** towards the gerund, then the compound is **double-stressed**. The resulting compound is always a noun, e.g. 'mass 'meeting; 'ball 'bearing; 'fellow 'feeling, etc.

4. Adjective + N

The compound is single stressed in most cases, e.g. 'earthen ware; 'flat iron; 'dramatic ,society; 'light ,weight.

5. -ing form + N (-ing form acting as an adjective).

- (i) When the **second component does not do the action**, mentioned in the first component, then it is single stressed, e.g. 'reading ,lamp; 'boarding ,house; 'dressing ,gown.

- (ii) But when the **second component does the action** mentioned in the first component then the compound is double stressed, e.g. 'leading 'question; 'floating 'bridge; 'working 'class; 'burning 'bush, etc.

There may be compounds containing more than two words. Here the stress is subject to rhythmical variation.

### **Rhythmical variations :**

Double stressed words are subject to modification in sentences. The first of the stressed syllable is apt to lose its stress when preceded by another stressed syllable. Similarly, the second of the stressed syllables is apt to lose its stress when closely followed by another stressed syllable.

#### **Example :**

- (a) 'four'teen (double stressed) in answer to the question: How many people are there?
- (b) 'fourteen 'shillings (stress on first syllable)
- (c) 'just four'teen (stress on second syllable)

#### **More examples :**

'inlaid 'wood → 'all in'laid.

'unknown 'land → 'quite un'known.

'sardine 'sandwiches → a 'tin of sar'dines.

### **Stress of Initials and Numbers :**

1. **Two components** = (both the components are stressed) e.g. 'A'D; 'U'K; etc.
2. **Three or four components** = (first and last components are stressed)  
e.g. 'PM'G ; '30'8; 'RSVP; '438'9.
3. **Five components** = (the first, third and fifth components are stressed)  
e.g. 'AM'IC'E; '73'12'6 ;
4. **Six components** = The components are divided into two series of three,  
e.g. '39,5 | '62'1 ; '98 ,462'3 etc.

#### **Exercise : Unit review questions :**

Put stress marks on the following words:

- (a) postman; school bus ; tea party ; raincoat.
- (b) afternoon ; vice chancellor; post graduate ; home-made.
- (c) BA; USSR; RC; PWD; USA; 235502.

### 7.3.2 THE STUDY OF ENGLISH INTONATION

The following is an elementary introduction to the study of English intonation. It should be supplemented by reading of various books, e.g. by O'Connor and Arnold (**Intonation of Colloquial English**) and doing some listening exercises based on the same. Be careful to be quite clear how the terms sense-group, stress and accent are used. They are rarely used with exactly the same meaning.

1. Connected speech is divided into intonation groups (sometimes called sense-groups or breath groups). These groups most frequently extend over a clause but may extend over smaller or larger units. For example, the noun phrase subject of a clause may have a group of its own; and adverbial phrase may have a group of its own, or a group may sometimes extend over a sentence made up of two clauses (as is frequently the case with short conditionals).

#### Example :

- (a) / The lorry started, / and ran over him/.
- (b) / The next Sheriff of Nottingham/ was waiting at the ticket-counter/.
- (c) / Unfortunately/, it didn't work/.
- (d) / I'll do it if I can/.

2. A syllable (called the **nucleus** or **tonic**) in each intonation-group is selected to receive the main accent by beginning at this point one of a limited number of pitch patterns (or tones). The word in which this syllable occurs is thus made the most important syllable in the group, called the **nucleus**.

3. The pitch pattern from the nucleus, and including all following syllables up to the end of the group (these constitute the **tail**), is called the **unclear tone**.

One way of marking intonation is to put a short-hand mark for the particular nuclear tone before the nucleus.

**Example :** (a) It 'wasn't very nice.

(. .)

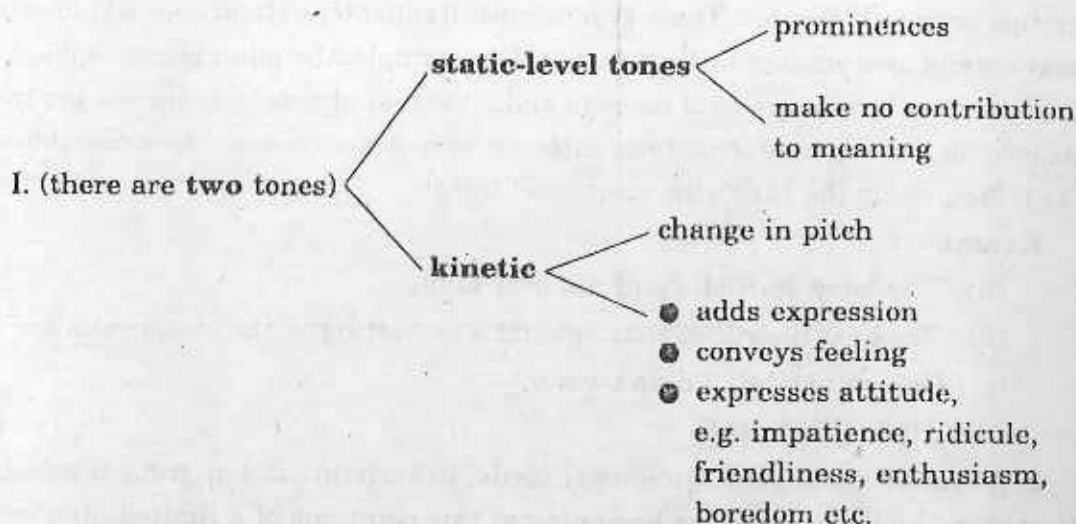
(b) I w'ant to g'o to'morrow.

(. .)

This indicates two things. It tells us:

(a) which syllable has been accepted for main accent.

(b) which syllables stand out in pitch from unstressed syllables. The stressed syllables are more clearly articulated than unstressed syllables. Stress in English serves to mark the meaningful words in an utterance. Usually the meaningful words are content words such as **nouns, adjectives, main verbs, and adverbs**. As we already know, word order is very important in English. Therefore, it is often possible to decode a message even if you are not able to hear the unstressed words. This knowledge is used in telegraphy. The words we pay for when sending a telegram are the stressed words or the most important words according to the need of the sender.



## II. Change in pitch :

- |                       |                                     |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (1) / the rising tone | (2) \ falling tone                  |
| (3) v fall rise       | (4) ^ rise fall ; ~ rise-fall-rise. |

III. Tones 1 to 3 are enough for straight-forward communication. Every complete utterance must have atleast **one kinetic stress**. It usually falls on the last important word according to what the speaker wishes to express.

In a sentence, which word usually takes the kinetic stress ?

The **kinetic stress** usually comes on the last stressed word of a sentence.

Let's see how we can change the whole meaning of a sentence simply by shifting the point of kinetic stress – (the **tonic stress** as it is usually called),

e.g. 'John **'didn't** speak to Mary. (You've got it all wrong)

**'John** didn't speak to Mary. (Peter did)

'John didn't **'speak** to Mary. (He wrote a letter)

'John 'didn't 'speak to **'Mary**. (He spoke to Anne)

(Notice how after the tonic stress, what's left of the sentence stays at the same pitch, with very little stress even on normally stressed syllables.)

This variation in pitch is called **intonation**.

|| 'What did you 'want to do | 'that for? ||

(Pre-tonic segment)      (tonic segment)

If we analyse unstressed words we find they are usually:

- (i) Pronouns = (I, you, me, etc.)
- (ii) auxiliary and modal verbs = (shall, can, etc.) not main verbs
- (iii) prepositions = (at, on, with, from, etc.)
- (iv) articles = (the, a, an)
- (v) conjunctions = (and, but, etc.)

Sometimes these unimportant grammatical words may be stressed for emphasis.

Study the following sentence:

(i) 'Come and 'meet **`me** tomorrow. (special emphasis on the word 'me', i.e. the hearer should meet no one else.)

(ii) 'Please per'mit **`me** to do that. (i.e. you shouldn't allow any one else to do it.)

### **The choice of a tone :**

The sentence is divided into two groups and having chosen the nucleus, a speaker has to choose an appropriate tone. It is impossible to suggest particular contexts and point out that only one of the various tones should be used in these contexts. What we can do is to point out a few contexts and indicate that in these contexts a particular tone may be used.

Intonation in English serves:

- (a) a grammatical function



(b) an attitudinal function.

In other words, with the help of intonation, the hearer can make out whether an utterance is a statement or a question, a command or a request.

Again with the help of intonation one can find out the attitude or mood of the speaker, i.e. whether the person is bored, annoyed, interested in the subject of conversation, or whether the person is sarcastic, etc. Here are a few examples of some tone-patterns:

### **Tone Types :**

#### **Rising tone : ( / )**

(a) Study the following sentences and notice where the nucleus is:

(i) Was it / there? (ii) Has / John come? (iii) Is / this the one?

Yes/No type of questions usually take a rising tone at the nucleus. If the nucleus shifts to the anomalous finite (i.e. Was/Has/Is) it suggests performance or non-performance of the action.

(b) Use the rising tone for **reassuring, encouraging**, e.g.

(i) 'Cheer / up (ii) It 'wont 'last / long.

(c) Study the following sentences and notice the nucleus:

(i) 'How's your / daughter? Enquiring

(ii) 'When are you 'coming to / see us? { showing

(iii) 'When did you get 'back from / holiday? { interest

(Use a glide up when you wish to show as much interest in the other person as in the subject.)

(d) Now study these sentences:

(i) / What? (ii) / What did you say? (iii) / Where's he going?

(We usually use the glide up on the wh- word in such interrogative statements when we ask for repetition.)

(e) We use the rising tone on the nucleus in some wh- questions as the following:

(i) 'When can you / come? (polite enquiry)

(ii) 'Why can't you / do it? (threatening)

(f) We use the rising tone and the falling tone for alternate questions:

(i) A. Will you have /this one or 'that one?

B. 'Neither, /thank you.

(ii) A. Will you have /cake or 'pastry?

B. 'Cake, /please.

(g) We use the falling tone and the rising tone in certain **question-tags** where the response could be either 'yes' or 'no', specially when we ask for opinion:

E.g. (i) You're coming to 'tea with us, /aren't you?

(ii) He d'idn't look 'ill, /did he?

(h) We use the rising tone at the nucleus which suggests incomplete utterance and the falling tone at the nucleus to suggest completeness of the utterance. For example:

(i) 'Taken as a /whole, the re'sults aren't `bad.

(ii) There was 'once a 'rat named /Arthur, who 'lived in a `village.

(i) Use a glide-up at the nucleus for gentle commands or requests.

E.g. (i) /Sit here.

(ii) /Take this.

(iii) 'Sit /there. (polite invitation)

(iv) 'Shut the /door. (polite request)

(j) For exclamations, greetings, etc. use a rising tone:

(i) 'Good /morning. (cheerful greeting)

(ii) /Oh! /Really! /Well!

(k) Use the glide up for perfunctory apologies:

/Sorry ! I'm /sorry !

- (l) For items in the enumeration use a glide up and a falling tone at the last nucleus suggesting completeness:

e.g. She offered us /jam, /marmalade and /honey.

**The Falling tone (\):**

- (a) (i) Use the falling tone at the nucleus for straight-forward statements:

e.g. (a) I 'think you'd 'better 'ask the `others.

(b) I've never 'met them.

- (ii) With stressed objects :

(a) We pre'fer `coffee.

(b) He 'wrote a 'letter to your `brother.

- (b) For end-position adverbials which have great semantic value, the nucleus takes a falling tone :

(a) He's c'oming to'morrow

(b) I 'posted the letter `early.

- (c) **Particular wh- questions** take a falling tone:

e.g. (i) `Why? `What for? 'How many more?

(ii) 'Who 'gave you the `yellow one?

- (d) **Normal greetings** take a falling tone at the nucleus:

e.g. 'Good `morning. 'How d'you `do?

- (e) **Strong exclamations** take a falling tone,

e.g. `Nonsense! 'Good `Heavens!

- (f) **Commands** take a falling tone, (angry commands)

e.g. 'Put that `down. 'Leave me a `lone.

- (g) **Statements with interrogative clauses:**

e.g. (i) 'Isn't he 'like his `father. (not a question)

(ii) 'Do that again and you're `fired. (not a command)

- (h) In question-tags where you wish to urge the hearer to express his agreement or approval, the nucleus takes a falling tone.

e.g. (i) She'll 'wait, 'won't she?

(ii) He 'likes it, 'doesn't he?

(iii) He 'doesn't 'like it, 'does he?

(i) Statements that suggest strong agreement or disagreement take a falling tone at the nucleus.

e.g. (i) 'No. I 'did do it. (ii) 'Certainly 'not.

### The Fall rise : (v)

This tone normally indicates that something is implied – which is not expressed in the utterance. This can express other attitudes as well.

(i) the fall-rise can occur within the same syllable, or

(ii) as we have seen, it can be a divided fall-rise where the fall and rise may occur on different syllables.

### Examples :

1. (a) A. Do you play tennis?

B. vSometimes. (not always, surely)

A. vNow. (doubtful)

(b) A. I 'saw you at the vcinema. (**reproaching** – 'You said you had to study for your exams'.)

(c) A. 'John's here valready. (so do hurry up)

(d) A. She is vbeautiful. (but not very clever)

(e) A. The vcoffee was good. (but the service was awful)

2. (a) A. 'I can. (I am almost sure you can't)

(b) A. You did 'quite well. (encouraging, sympathetic)

(c) A. 'That's the spirit. (encouraging, sympathetic)

(d) A. 'When will you do it? (to know the precise time in a polite way)

(e) A. 'Mind that step. (Strong but sympathetic warning)

3. **Apologies** : (say the following utterances and see the difference in attitude):

(a) I'm 'terribly sorry.

I'm 'terribly sorry.

I'm terribly vsorry.

(b) I 'hope it's 'not going to be inconvenient for you.

4. **Thanking** : √Thank you 'Thank you 'very √much.

5. **Request to repeat** : I beg your √pardon. (haven't understood)

6. **Hinting** : Those √cakes smell nice.

7. **Warnings** : (i) You'll √fall. (ii) It's √raining you, know.

8. **Interrogatives** : (requests)

e.g. (i) Will you 'get me a 'glass of √water please?

(ii) Would you mind 'not √smoking in this compartment.

9. **Imperatives** : 'Have a good time. Enjoy yourself.

(knock at the door) Come √in. / Come in.

### **The Rising-falling tone :**

In this tone, the **rise** reinforces the meaning conveyed by the following **fall**. Besides that, the initial rise may indicate warmth, anger or sarcasm.

e.g. A. The 'film was 'awful. Do you agree?

B. ^Yes. (enthusiastic agreement)

It was ^frightful. (enthusiastic agreement)

A. But is her ^son in the picture? (suspicious interest)

B. Are you ^sure he was right? (suspicious, mocking)

How ^interesting. (sarcastic)

It is difficult to master the intonation of any foreign language. Only theoretical knowledge does not help. It is perhaps necessary to listen to a lot of English being spoken for a considerable period of time to gain mastery over this extremely complex aspect of the language.

### **Exercise : Unit review questions :**

1. Find the nucleus and mark the kinetic and static stress:

(a) A. Did you want something?

B. Can I borrow a pen, please?

(b) A. Where's John?

B. He's in the bathroom.



- A. Has he got a job?
- B. No, he's on the waiting list.
- (c) A. I had a smash in the car.
- B. How did that happen?
- (d) A. It's just four o'clock.
- B. Are you sure your watch is right?
- (e) A. What's the time?
- B. Ten past two, dear.
- A. When does the train leave?
- B. Not until a quarter to four.
- A. Why did you get here so early?
- B. Because you said we must allow plenty of time for traffic jams and accidents.
- (f) Mark the juncture. Find the nucleus and mark static and kinetic stress:

When my grandmother died at the age of eighty nine, we discovered that she had left us the contents of an unusual savings account. Throughout her life, whenever she found a coin as she cleaned the house or emptied the pockets of clothes to be washed, she deposited it in this account.

### 7.3.3 ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

#### Weak forms of words :

Another very important aspect of English pronunciation is the use of weak forms in speech. There are a number of words in English that have their weak forms in English speech. English spoken with only strong forms sounds wrong. Therefore the use of weak forms is an essential part of English speech. When these words are stressed or when they are pronounced in isolation, the strong forms of these words are used; when they are unstressed, the weak forms of these words are used. In the weak forms we can see that there is reduction in the length of sounds, weakening of the vowels in them and also elision of vowels and consonants. In

the following chart are given a few common words with both forms – strong and weak :

| Word                   | Strong Form | Weak Form                                 |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------|
| <b>Articles</b>        |             |                                           |
| a                      | eɪ          | ə                                         |
| an                     | æn          | ən                                        |
| the                    | ði          | ðɪ  before vowel<br> ðə  before consonant |
| <b>Auxiliary Verbs</b> |             |                                           |
| am                     | /æm/        | /əm/, /m/                                 |
| are                    | /a:/        | /ə/                                       |
| can                    | /kæn/       | /kən/                                     |
| could                  | /kʊd/       | /kəd/                                     |
| does                   | /dʌz/       | /dəz/ /z/ /s/                             |
| do                     | /du/        | /dʊ/ /də/ /d/                             |
| had                    | /hæd/       | /həd/ /əd/ /d/                            |
| has                    | /hæz/       | /həz/ /əz/ /z/ /s/                        |
| have                   | /hæv/       | /həv/ /əv/ /v/                            |
| is                     | /ɪz/        | /z/ /s/                                   |
| must                   | /mʌst/      | /məst/ /məs/                              |
| shall                  | /ʃæl/       | /ʃəl/ /ʃ/                                 |
| was                    | /wɒz/       | /wəz/                                     |
| were                   | /wɜ:/       | /wəl/                                     |
| will                   | /wɪl/       | /l/                                       |
| would                  | /wʊd/       | /əd/ /d/                                  |
| <b>Prepositions</b>    |             |                                           |
| at                     | /æt/        | /ət/                                      |
| for                    | /fɜ:/       | /fə/                                      |
| from                   | /frɒm/      | /frəm/                                    |
| of                     | /ɒv/        | /əv/ /v/ /ə/                              |
| to                     | /tu/        | /tʊ/ /tə/                                 |
| <b>Conjunctions</b>    |             |                                           |
| and                    | /ænd/       | /ənd/ /nd/ /ən/ /n/                       |
| as                     | /æz/        | /əz/                                      |
| than                   | /ðæn/       | /ðən/ /ðn/                                |

|                            |         |              |
|----------------------------|---------|--------------|
| that                       | /ðæt/   | /ðæt/        |
| but                        | /bʌt/   | /bət/        |
| <b>Other words</b>         |         |              |
| be                         | /bi/    | /bɪ/         |
| been                       | /bin/   | /bɪn/        |
| he                         | /hi/    | /hɪ/ /i/ /ɪ/ |
| her                        | /hɜ/    | /hə/ /ɜ/ /ə/ |
| him                        | /hɪm/   | /ɪm/         |
| She                        | /ʃi/    | /ʃɪ/         |
| <b>Other words</b>         |         |              |
| his                        | /hɪz/   | /ɪz/         |
| me                         | /mi/    | /mɪ/         |
| not                        | /nɒt/   | /nt/ /n/     |
| some                       | /sʌm/   | /səm/        |
| there                      | /ðeə/   | /ðə/         |
| <b>(indefinite adverb)</b> |         |              |
| us                         | /ʌs/    | /əs/ /s/     |
| we                         | /wi/    | /wɪ/         |
| were                       | /wə(r)/ | /wə/         |
| who                        | /hu/    | /hʊ/ /u/ /ʊ/ |
| you                        | /ju/    | /jʊ/         |

**Note :** The weak form of prepositions are not used when they occur at the end of a sentence, e.g.

/wɛə hæz hɪ kʌm frɒm/; /wɛə r jʊ gəʊɪŋ tu/

An important feature of the pronunciation of English is simplification in the production of speech. We always make minimum effort in our speech without causing any hindrance to communication. Economy of effort is called simplification – which is common in colloquial speech. This is done in different ways. We have already learnt the weak forms of words. The others are : (i) assimilation; (ii) elision, and (iii) contracted forms.

(i) **Assimilation** is defined as a process of replacing a sound by another sound under the influence of a third sound which is near to it in the word or sentence.

Sound A is replaced by sound B under the influence of sound C, e.g. horse shoe → /hɔʃʃu/, i.e. /s/ in **horse** is replaced by /ʃ/ under the influence of /ʃ/ in shoe.

(ii) The term may also be extended to include cases where a sequence of two

sounds coalesce and gives place to a single new sound different from either of the original sounds, e.g. the sounds A and C influence each other and coalesce into the single sound B, e.g. don't you → /doʊntʃu/

Assimilations are of two chief kinds → (i) historical, and (ii) contextual.

By (i) historical assimilation we mean an assimilation which has taken place in the course of development of a language, and by which a word which was once pronounced in a certain way came to be pronounced subsequently in another way.

By (ii) contextual assimilation we mean one which takes place when words are juxtaposed in a sentence or in the formation of compounds, and by which a word comes to have a pronunciation different from that which it has when said by itself.

**(i) Historical assimilation :**

e.g. (a) In the 13<sup>th</sup> century/14<sup>th</sup> century – the word 'ant' was pronounced /æmətə/ and written as 'amete'.

later → /æmtə/ and /æmt/

15<sup>th</sup> century → /ænt/

(b) Some hundreds of years ago the word 'picture' was pronounced as /piktʃʊr/. Later the sequence of /tʃ/ changed to /t/.

**(ii) Contextual assimilation :**

(a) assimilation of **voiceless** to **voice** and **voice** to **voiceless**. e.g. (a) /ɪz/ is reduced to /z/ when preceded by a **voiced sound** other than /z/ or /ʒ/.

e.g. Who is there? /hʊz ðeə/

Diner is ready. /dɪnə z redɪ/

When is he coming? /wenz (h) i kʌmɪŋ/

(b) /ɪz/ is reduced to /s/ when preceded by a **voiceless consonant** other than /s/ or /ʃ/

e.g. It is ready. /ɪt s redɪ/

That is all. /ðæt sɔl/

What is the time? /wɒts ðə taɪm/

The shop is open. /ðə ʃɒps əʊpən/

'Has' is treated in the same way,

e.g. Who has been here? /hʊz bɪn hɪə/

Jack has been here. /dʒæksbɪnhɪə/

**More examples :**

(i) assimilation affecting the position of the tongue in pronouncing consonants.

(a) replacement of /s/ by /ʃ/ under the influence of the following /j/.

e.g. This shop. /ðɪʃ ʃɒp/

Of course she does. /v kɔːʃdʌz/

- (b) replacement of /z/ by /ʒ/ under the influence of /ʃ/, e.g. Does she?

/dʌʒ ʃi/

Butcher's shop. /bʊtʃəz ʃɒp/

newspaper → /njuːspetpə/

handkerchief → /hæŋkətʃɪf/

There are several assimilation changes that take place in English pronunciation.

(ii) **Elision :**

In order to maintain the characteristic rhythm of English, we often have to pronounce the unaccented syllables very fast, and in doing so, certain sounds are elided. For example, the word 'them' which is pronounced /ðem/ in isolation, may be heard as /ðm/ in connected speech particularly when it is not stressed. Following are a few examples of elision:

- (a) The sounds /t/ and /d/ at the end of a word after another consonant are elided, e.g. exactly, past, old, friend.

Read the following sentence rapidly and notice the sounds that are elided:

**The postman was an old man.**

The above sentence will read as follows:

/ðə pəʊsmən wəzən əʊlmæn/. [The sounds /t/ and /d/ have been elided.]

This is **contextual elision**. Here are a few more examples:

bestman = /besmæn/; soft centred = /sɒfsentəd/

mashed potatoes = /mæʃpəteɪtəʊz/; brand new = /brænnju/;

last time = /lastaɪm/; sit down = /sɪdaʊn/; etc.

- (b) loss of /k/ in 'asked', e.g. /ast/

- (c) /h/ is lost in weak form of 'have', 'has', 'had', 'his', 'her', 'him' except when it is preceded by a pause or a vowel sound.

- (d) /ʃ/ is lost in the weak form of 'shall'.

/w/ is lost in the weak form of 'will'.

/l/ is lost after the vowel /ɒ/ in words like, already, all right, etc.

/r/ is elided along with an unaccented vowel /ə/

When another /r/ is close, e.g. library = /laɪbrɪ/,

literary = /lɪtrɪ/; temporary = /tempɪrɪ/; February = /febrɪ/ etc.

These are **historical elisions**.

- (e) Vowel elision is seen mainly in unaccented syllables. This often causes loss of a syllable, e.g. loss of /ə/ after a consonant and before /r/ /l/ /n/ in an unaccented syllable immediately after an accented syllable, e.g.



/hɪstri/ /fæmli/ /rɪznəbl/ etc.

Often in words ending in —ory; —ery; —ary; —ury; and —lly,  
e.g. carefully = /kæəflɪ/.

We can find elision in the second element of a diphthong before /ə/,  
e.g. tower = /ta/; our = /a/, etc.

There are many more examples of assimilation and elision in the English speech of native speakers of English. But it is not always necessary to have all these changes in our speech as long as it is intelligible.

- (iii) The next important aspect is the use of contracted forms of verbs in English connected speech.

Some auxiliary verbs have contracted positive forms which can be used

(a) **after a pronoun**, e.g. He's going to Mumbai. What'll you do? (b) **after a short noun**, e.g. The dog's barking, or (c) **after the words 'here', 'there', 'now'**, e.g. Here's something for you.

**More examples :** (negative)

does not = doesn't

have not = haven't;

do not = don't ;

has not = hasn't ;

did not = didn't ;

had not = hadn't.

**Contracted non-negative + negative forms :**

I have = I've;

I don't have any books.

He has = He's;

/aɪ daʊnt hæv enɪ bʊks/

She had = She'd;

I am = I'm;

(a) I have never been to Puri.

He is = He's

/aɪhæv nevə bin tʊpʊrɪ/

She was not = She wasn't;

(b) She wasn't aware;

They were not = They weren't;

/ɪ wɒzn't əweə/

I can not = I can't;

(a) I can't sing /aɪ kant sɪŋ/

She could not = She couldn't; /ʃkʊdn/

He will not = He won't; /hɪwəʊnt/

She will = She'll do it; /ʃɪldʊt/

(b) They must not shout

They must not = They musn't;

/ðeɪ mʌsn ʃaʊt/

All these examples of simplification, of changes and disappearances of sounds should help you to listen most carefully to the real shapes of English words, which are so often different from the shapes which the ordinary spelling might suggest.

### 7.3.4 EXERCISE

**Ex. 1.** Convert the following dialogue into orthographic script and mark the kinetic and static stress :

|| hæləʊ rədə læk rænɪŋ ɪntəvju ||

|| aɪ traɪt tərɪŋ juːp l bæt jʊ wʒnt ðeə ||

|| wɛn wəz ðæt ||

|| jestədeɪ ||

|| eʊ jes | aɪd left baɪ den | dɪdʒu wɒnt mɪ fə sʌmθɪŋ speɪ(ə) ||

|| a ju duɪn eniθɪŋ ɪn pətɪkjʊlə ðɪs wɪk end ||

**Ex. 2.** Transcribe the following into phonetic script. Use weak forms, contracted forms, assimilation and elision wherever possible.

You remind me of my brother. He was always on the move. He had a passion for peanuts and monkey nuts. He wouldn't touch a piece of fruit-cake. I called him Robin. My mother called him Robin too. I don't know who you are. Perhaps you live somewhere near the Post Office, don't you?

**Ex. 3.** Study the dialogue in Ex. 1. and find

(a) 2 examples of contracted forms. \_\_\_\_\_

(b) 2 examples of weak forms. \_\_\_\_\_

(c) 1 example of assimilation. \_\_\_\_\_

(d) 2 examples of elision. \_\_\_\_\_

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## **UNIT 8 □ STANDARDS OF PRONUNCIATION & TEACHING IMPLICATIONS**

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### **8.0 Learning Objectives**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

##### **8.1.1 Standards of Pronunciation : Historical Perspectives**

##### **8.1.2 Standards of Pronunciation : The Situation Now**

#### **8.2 Teaching Implications**

##### **8.2.1 Difficulties with Pure Vowels**

##### **8.2.2 Difficulties with Diphthongs**

#### **8.3 Difficulties with Consonants**

##### **8.3.1 Plosives**

##### **8.3.2 Affricates**

##### **8.3.3 Fricatives**

#### **8.4 Some important Considerations**

##### **8.4.1 Objectives of Pronunciation Teaching**

##### **8.4.2 Syllabus for Pronunciation Teaching**

#### **8.5 Summing up**

#### **8.6 Exercise**

#### **8.7 Glossary**

#### **8.8 Bibliography**

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## **8.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

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**When you go through this unit you will**

- (i) get an overview of the changes in the pronunciation of English sounds and words and the reasons for these changes,
- (ii) have an overview of the standards of pronunciation now being followed, their respective acceptability and the reasons for their acceptability,
- (iii) acquaint yourself with the field of pronunciation teaching,

- (iv) choose the strategy or strategies most suitable for your need while teaching pronunciation, and
- (v) help your learners to produce correct sounds and/or correct their production of sounds to an acceptable standard.

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## 8.1 INTRODUCTION

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The language spoken in England has undergone changes over the years as any living language does. The changes concern not only its pronunciation but also its morphology, syntax and vocabulary. A modern-day Englishman will understand Old English neither in its written form nor in its spoken form.

The pronunciation of a language changes continuously and that is the mark of a living language. Even within our living memory language changes take place, e.g. the pronunciation of a sound may differ between older and younger generations.

In the area of sounds the most important change may manifest itself in the realization of a phoneme in all its occurrences. Such changes may be *internal*, (for example, *house* was pronounced as / hu:s / in Middle English which is generally pronounced as / haus / in modern English), or *external* (for example, the French word *beige* is pronounced /beiz/ in English with the final /z/ sound which is unknown in English words). Besides such changes in quality, there are changes involving *quantity* and *stress* or *accent*. For example, the vowel sound in words such as *path* or *half* was short about three hundred years ago but now it is long in the South of England. Changes of accent is particularly noticeable in words which have come into English from French. For example, in words such as *village* or *necessary* the stress was retained in the penultimate syllable even in Middle English (/vila:dʒə/ or /nese `sa:riə/. Now the main stress has shifted to the first syllable in English fashion /vilidz/, 'nesəsəri.

This is a short introduction to some of the changes that have come into English pronunciation over the centuries for various reasons. These changes may constitute the subject matter of a full study. In this module, however, we are more concerned with the standards of pronunciation: what kind of pronunciation we should use and teach, and how, as teachers, we should teach a spoken form of the language that is intelligible to a maximum number of people.

### 8.1.1 STANDARDS OF PRONUNCIATION : HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

The English are particularly sensitive to variations in the pronunciation of their language. "The 'wrong accent' may still be an impediment to social intercourse or to advancement in or entry to certain professions" (Gimson). Such extreme sensitivity may make people claim that modern speech is becoming more slovenly, full of mumbling and mangled vowels and missing consonants. There is, however, little evidence to show that English is spoken in a more 'slovenly' manner now than it was a few centuries ago. However, what is more significant, socially as well as linguistically, is the attitude that considers a certain set of sound values as more acceptable or 'more beautiful' than another. This factor suggests that there does exist a standard for comparison although it is never explicitly imposed by any official body.

It is to be noted that no such controversy exists as far as the written form of the language is concerned. The spelling of English, the grammatical forms and structures and a greater part of vocabulary have been established, accepted and used for a long time by the majority of educated English speakers. But spoken realizations of English vary in different parts of the country and in different sections of the community. Moreover, the sounds of the language have always been subjected to change, thereby giving rise to disparities between the speech sounds of younger and older generations. Two other reasons for such changes are, poor communications between regions, and different external influences like foreign invasions which influenced the sound structures of the language in a particular area. These also gave rise to regional pronunciations. However, the notion that one variety of pronunciation was socially more acceptable than the others has always existed in England. For reasons of politics, commerce and the presence of the (Royal) Court, the pronunciation of the South-East of England, and more particularly that of the London region became more prestigious. Public schools of the nineteenth century also helped in the dissemination of the speech of the ruling class. However, it is recognized more as the speech of a social class than as that of a region. With the spread of education, educated people whether or not they belonged to the upper classes and people who wanted to advance socially, changed their accent to sound more like the socially accepted standard.



### 8.1.2 STANDARDS OF PRONUNCIATION : THE SITUATION NOW

This socially accepted standard of pronunciation still has a great prestige value and is referred to as *Received Pronunciation* (RP). This pronunciation became widely familiar with the advent of the radio. The BBC recommended this form of pronunciation for its announcers because it was more widely understood, and aroused least prejudice of the regional kind. Thus, RP became associated in the public mind with BBC English. This form of pronunciation is now most commonly described in books on the phonetics of British English and traditionally taught to foreigners.

However, nowadays RP is not spoken exclusively by a particular section of society. This change is due to two reasons: one is the spread of education and the other is the influence of the radio. The Radio has constantly brought the RP accent to the ears of the whole range of listening public. Added to this factor is the disappearance of sharp social divisions. As a result the notable characteristics of regional speech and that of the London region are now not as prominent as it used to be, because both are modified to sound more like RP. In a sense RP is now considered to be the correct pronunciation.

This does not mean that regional accents have disappeared. On the other hand, some members of the younger generation reject RP because they associate it with the 'Establishment'. For them a regional or popular accent has a greater prestige. As a matter of fact, at present a more regional, therefore, more non-RP or non-British accent is often heard even on BBC radio and television. The spread of pop music and culture also contributed to the tendency of especially younger generations using regional and popular accents. Moreover, certain regional pronunciations like Scottish English accent or American English are universally accepted.

Within RP we may distinguish three main types: the *conservative* RP form which is mainly used by the older generation and by certain profession or social groups; the *general* RP forms most commonly used and the pronunciation adopted by the BBC, and the *advanced* RP forms mainly used by young people of mostly upper classes and in certain professional circles.

We also need to remember that in addition to over 300 million people speaking English as a *first* language, a very large number of people from Africa and the Indian sub-continent use English as a *lingua franca* along with a large number of indigenous languages. The interference of the indigenous (that is, local) phonological

structures may effect the intelligibility of spoken English as a means of communication. Even where some reasonable degree of intelligibility is retained within any one country, serious deficiencies of a mainly phonological kind pose an acute intelligibility problem when English is used as an international means of communication (especially when we think in terms of multinational trade and commerce). It is for this reason that efforts should be made to adopt either a British or American model when teaching English as a *second* language.

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## 8.2 TEACHING IMPLICATIONS

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All will agree that pronunciation is an important part of foreign or second language learning. For many learners it remains an obstacle that has to be overcome.

The question arises : when should pronunciation be taught and how? Should we begin with phonic drills *before* we teach grammar and vocabulary, or vice versa? Should correct pronunciation be taught at an early age or can the adult learners also pick up good pronunciation with equal ease? While talking about strategies, should pronunciation be taught overtly or should it be introduced gradually and unobtrusively? Does one teach stress and intonation relatively early in the course, or when the sound pattern along with vocabulary and grammar have been already mastered?

Answers to these questions vary. Opinions are still evolving with the development of modern linguistics, as phonetics and phonology became associated with, and later incorporated into this discipline.

Sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics have also made valuable contributions in evolving contemporary trends.

Before we talk about the current opinions, let us go back a little to the middle of the last century.

A systematic approach to phonology based on the concept of the phoneme was introduced into structural and audio-lingual language teaching in the 1940's and 50's. The use of contrastive study of speech sounds across languages helped to identify the similarities and differences between the sounds of the target language and the language of the learner. It was believed that the information thus gathered would systematically help learners to overcome the phonological difficulties presented by the new language.

In the 1960's a trend was established which is still being followed. The trend is to consider discrimination as well as production of sounds. It emphasizes teaching

of segmental phonemes, phonemic contrast and contrastive analysis using a variety of practical exercises. It also recognizes the importance of supra-segmental features and offers practice on stress and intonation. Most training takes place relatively early in a course and pronunciation is introduced more gradually and unobtrusively. The emphasis then shifts to global listening, speaking activities, grammar teaching, etc.

Another method advocates mimicking and imitating the teacher without offering any explanation. Specific exercises are used to deal with particular pronunciation problems as and when they arise. Phonetic or phonological explanations may be offered if none of the above procedures work. It is sometimes said that with the introduction of communicative language teaching in the 1980's the teaching of pronunciation has been neglected. This has led other teachers to re-emphasize the need for attention to pronunciation so that the learners can communicate effectively, which is after all the goal of this approach. A number of useful techniques for training pronunciation is now available.

It is important to note the changes that the sociolinguistic view of language has brought about in the definition of objectives in teaching pronunciation. Firstly, it is now accepted that acquisition of a native-like pronunciation is no longer necessary. To decide on the kind of pronunciation you want to teach, it is more important to take into account the role of the foreign speaker in relation to the native speaker. The most important consideration is that the learner's pronunciation should be *intelligible to the native speaker*. Secondly, attention is paid to *acceptability* of pronunciation which may be called a social criterion. It means that learners should avoid acquiring features of pronunciation that the native listener might consider offensive or irritating. It is, therefore advisable that the learners are taught to articulate clearly using a neutral pronunciation avoiding strictly local characteristics. Thirdly, greater attention is now paid to the teaching of rhythm, stress and intonation. It is specially important to keep in mind that the changes in pronunciation occur when we utter larger units of speech than when we utter isolated words or sentences out of context. This is the area where discourse analysis has particularly influenced teaching of pronunciation.

Psycholinguistics has also contributed to the learning and teaching of pronunciation. For long it was widely believed that young children are superior to adults in the acquisition of a perfect native-like pronunciation. Recent psycholinguistic studies do not sustain this belief. The other belief that

psycholinguistics questions is that when a learner can perceive (i.e. understand) the difference between a native sound and a sound from the target language, he is able to produce that sound accurately. Researchers do not uphold this view. Even when he is given the feedback on the deficiencies in his production of the sound, it does not necessarily help him to rectify his deficiency.

In the light of what has been said so far, you realize that it is important that students are taught a standard pronunciation, if meaningful and intelligible communication is to take place between any two sets of people. In the Indian sub-continent, mainly for historical reasons, British pronunciation is preferred and RP or a near RP model is usually selected. In Unit 3 of this module, you have had a detailed description of English phonemes and their pronunciation. Our aim is to teach the learners a model that is intelligible and acceptable to native speakers of English of any variety – British, American, Australian or any other.

In the following section we are going to deal with the problems that each of the phonemes may pose to foreign learners. The suggestions given may help you to correct your learners' pronunciation to an accepted level.

## 8.2.1 DIFFICULTIES WITH PURE VOWELS

### A. PURE VOWELS /i:/ and /ɪ/

In the production of these vowels your learners may not face any difficulty as such. However, especially in Bengali and other languages of Eastern India, e.g. Assamese or Oriya, there is a tendency to replace one phoneme for the other or produce an 'in between' sound. This is because, though in theory these two phonemes exist in the vowel systems of these languages, (i.e. there are short and long *ee* sounds in the vowel systems), in their actual production, especially in words, it is not mandatory to make this distinction to avoid misunderstanding. As a result, in pronouncing English words containing these two sounds there is a tendency to use a centralized phoneme, i.e. a sound that has an indiscriminate length between these two English phonemes. To give an example, *sheep* and *ship* may both be pronounced as /ʃi:p/. It is a problem serious enough to cause confusion or breakdown in communication. To overcome this problem: (i) the learners should be made aware of the difference in length between these two phonemes with suitable examples, (ii) a lot of practice with minimal pairs with these two phonemes, e.g. *heel* and *hill*, *seat* and *sit*, etc. may be given to raise their awareness. Sentences with such words



should also be used to bring out the difference between words with these two phonemes.

#### **B. PURE VOWEL /e/**

This vowel sound generally does not produce a problem serious enough to cause unintelligibility. However, some speakers may tend to equate English /e/ with a half-open variety, thereby using a vowel of too open a quality which might be confused with the /æ/ sound. These learners should be taught to modify their vowel in the direction of a closer variety.

#### **C. PURE VOWEL /æ/**

The problem with this vowel may not be acute. However, in some dialectal varieties of Eastern Indian languages this sound may not be as open as in English. In such cases the opposition between /e/ and /æ/ sounds may be emphasized by making the sound longer in examples such as *men, man; bed, bad*.

#### **D. PURE VOWELS /ʌ/ and /a/**

The first of these two vowels is not problematic as such. However, if there is a problem, good results can be obtained in teaching by transcribing the English vowel as /a/ rather than the traditional /ʌ/. In this way the prejudice against the frequent orthographic spelling with *u* or *o* is avoided. The second sound may cause some problem as it is not used as a distinctive phoneme in the languages referred to. This sound is often used as a neutral sound of indiscriminate length. To avoid this tendency the retracted nature of RP /a/ should be insisted upon and to achieve this, minimal pairs such as *cart, cot; calf, cuff*; also words like *much, march; hut, heart; bun, barn*, may be compared to underline the differences between these sounds.

#### **E. PURE VOWELS /ɒ/ and /a:/**

Short back open vowels in other languages often differ from English /ɒ/ in that they are somewhat closer or more centralized, or are pronounced with stronger lip-rounding. The vowel sound which is extremely open is /a:/, and the /ɒ/ sound may be compared to bring out this feature. The minimal pairs which will exemplify the sounds are *pot, part; hot, heart; dock, dark; cough, calf*.

#### **F. PURE VOWEL /ɔ:/**

The slightly longer nature of this sound may be brought out by emphasizing the slightly higher tongue position accompanied by closer lip-rounding. The [ɒ] sound



that already exists in the East Indian languages may serve as a starting point for acquiring the RP /ɔ:/, the tongue and lip positions being relaxed until the correct quality is reached.

The /o/ and /ɔ:/ sounds may be compared and practised using minimal pairs such as *pot, port; cod, cord; cot, court; stock, stork*; and so on.

### G. PURE VOWELS /u/ and /ʊ/

The first one of these two is a short vowel and that quality has to be brought out as in the case of /ɪ/ sound, also by pointing out that it is not just the reduced version of the /u:/ sound. Both are qualitatively and quantitatively different. The difference in quality may be heard in the pair *foot - boot* and that in both quality and quantity may be exemplified in *good - food*. Some of the minimal pairs for these sounds are *full, fool; pull, pool; wood, wooed; etc.*

### H. PURE VOWEL /ɜ:/

This sound causes problem for almost all the speakers of the languages of Eastern India and is often replaced by the /a:/ sound which is of retracted nature with lips neutrally open. To have an acceptable sound an articulation with spread lips should be insisted upon. The degree of raising of the tongue is also to be emphasized. The words such as *father, further; bard, bird; hard, heard; cart, curt; cut, cut; bud, bird; bun, burn; etc.* may be used to bring out the differences between various sounds.

### I. PURE VOWEL /ə/

As foreign learners we should remember this English sound has no lip-rounding and is extremely short. Moreover, when /ə/ is spelt with the vowel + r, the learner should avoid pronouncing any kind of [r] sound. We should also remember that this sound occurs very frequently in English and occurs in unaccented syllables, e.g. *father, famous, woman, suppose, etc.* /fɑ:ðə/, /'feiməs/, /'womən/, /səpəʊz/.

## 8.2.2 DIFFICULTIES WITH DIPHTHONGS

As you already know (from the previous unit) diphthongs form a glide within one syllable. We may say that they have two elements within it: the first element or the starting point and the second element or the point in the direction of which the glide is made. English diphthongs have as their first element the /ɪ, e, a, ə/ and /ʊ/ sounds, and as their second element /ɪ, ʊ/ and /ə/ sounds.

**A. DIPHTHONG /eɪ/** *Examples: late, day, rain, eight, great, etc.*

Foreign learners should give sufficient length to the first element of this diphthong and lightly touch upon the second element which should not be fully closed as in [ɪ]. The tendency to replace this sound with /e/ should be avoided.

**B. DIPHTHONG /aɪ/** *Examples: time, climb, high, die, either, etc.*

In this diphthong care should be taken to avoid retracting the first element too much so that it remains within the limits of the RP vowel. To achieve this the starting point should be in a front open position. Again care should be taken not to glide to a too close position as for vowel [ɪ].

**C. DIPHTHONG /əɪ/** *Examples: boy, noise, point, etc.*

This diphthong does not present much difficulty to foreign learners. However, care should be taken so that the quality of the first element is between the RP sounds /ɔ:/ and /ɒ/ and the glide does not extend beyond the half-close front level [e].

**D. DIPHTHONG /əʊ/** *Examples: old, road, foe, though, blow.*

To get the diphthong sound closer to the RP sound, the learners may learn /ɜ:/ first, and then modify /ɜ:/ by lip-rounding to the end of the vowel. Thus *fur* may be modified to *foe*, *burn* to *bone*, etc. This unless when [r] link is made before a following vowel should help to keep this diphthong distinct from the /ɔ:/ sound. Again, proper prominence should be given to the first element and the total length of the glide should be reduced appropriately.

**E. DIPHTHONG /aʊ/** *Examples: sound, cow, mouse, etc.*

Foreign learners should be careful to get the first element correct that is a variety which is not fronted or raised. Like in other diphthongs, the first element should be prominent and the second element should be lightly touched on, the tongue closing to a position not higher than half-close.

**F. CENTRING DIPHTHONGS /ɪə, eə, uə/** *Examples: dear, fierce, idea; care, air, bear; poor, pure; curious, tour. etc.*

For the first of these three diphthongs, the first element should be nearer [ɪ] rather than /i:/. The r which occurs frequently in the spelling of this diphthong should not be pronounced finally or before a consonant. The same suggestion may be made for the second of these three diphthongs. Half-open articulation of the first element of /eə/ and to emphasize this point, it may be helpful to begin the glide from RP /æ/

as in cat. For the third diphthong in this group the first element should be of a half-close kind rather than a sound resembling /u:/. The r sound in words like *poor*, *tour* should not be pronounced.

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## 8.3 DIFFICULTIES WITH CONSONANTS

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### 8.3.1 PLOSIVES /p/ /b/, /t/ /d/, /k/ /g/

We would like to remind you that while dealing with plosives, we should keep in mind their phonetic features, i.e. i) their places of articulation, ii) their force of articulation, iii) aspiration, iv) voicing, and also v) length of preceding sounds. To get the learners practise or to correct the production of plosive sounds, the teacher can clearly identify the area with reference to the above features.

It may be pointed out to foreign learners that the phonemes /p,t,k/ are pronounced with more muscular energy and a stronger breath effort than /b,d,g/. The former are known as *fortis* (relatively strong), and the latter as relatively weak or *lenis*.

Foreign learners are advised to pay particular attention to the aspiration of /p,t,k/ when these phonemes occur initially in an accented syllable. For example, if a word like *pin* is pronounced [pɪn] instead of [p<sup>h</sup>ɪn], it is likely that an English listener will interpret it as [bɪn], since he interprets lack of aspiration as a mark of lenis /b/. Aspiration is relatively weak in unaccented syllables, e.g. *polite*, *lip*. When /s/ precedes /p,t,k/, initially in a syllable, there is practically no aspiration, even when the syllable carries a strong accent, e.g. *pin* [p<sup>h</sup>ɪn] as opposed to *spin* [spɪn]. Care should be taken so that at the release stage of aspiration it is relatively inaudible.

Speakers of Indian languages who have dental and post-alveolar or retroflex varieties, should avoid using the retroflex plosives in English (for /t,d/). On the other hand, they should not use their dental /t,d/ for English /θ/, /ð/.

### 8.3.2 AFFRICATES /tʃ, dʒ/

In this group of sounds considerable friction occurs approximately at the point where the plosive stop is made. The friction is of shorter duration than that of fricatives proper.

The first of these affricates /tʃ/ poses no particular problem though sometimes it is replaced with the /s/ sound by some speakers. The /dʒ/ sound is also often replaced

by /z/ sound in many dialect speakers. For example, the word 'jew' may be pronounced as 'zoo' causing severe intelligibility problem. Learners' attention should be drawn to the position of the tip, blade and rims of the tongue and the upper alveolar ridge and the side teeth when these affricate sounds are produced and compared with those when pronouncing the fricatives /s/ or /z/.

### 8.3.3 FRICATIVES /f/ /v/; /θ/ /ð/; /s/ /z/; /ʃ/ /ʒ/

Most of these sounds pose problems for Indian speakers because of misunderstanding at both perception and production levels.

The phoneme /f/ which is labio-dental is often produced bilabially as that is nearer the bilabial phoneme with aspiration in Indian languages. In some cases the contact for /v/ is too weak, as Gimson points out. In either case the friction is lost. Care should be taken to distinguish such pairs as *pan- fan; fan- van*; etc. to establish the distinction between plosives and fricatives on the one hand, and fortis and lenis fricatives on the other. Comparison between the features of the plosive sounds in Indian languages and fricatives in English may also help.

The sounds /θ/ and /ð/ also tend to be produced as plosives under the influence of the native tongue by some native speakers of Indian languages. Again, comparison with the features of the native and target languages together with some production practice may help to get over the problems.

The last four sounds may be taken together as in many cases both the /s/-/ʃ/ and the /z/-/ʒ/ distinction is lost. In such cases besides getting the learners' attention to the correct places of articulation or the fortis-lenis distinction, practice with minimal pairs containing these sounds may be suggested. If a learner absolutely fails to pronounce the /ʒ/ sound, he should be allowed to make a sound nearer /ʃ/ rather than /z/. We have already mentioned the problem with /dʒ/-/z/ distinction among some speakers and the steps that may be taken by the teacher.

The nasals /m//n//ŋ/ or the lateral /l/ pose no particular problem for the speaker of Indian languages.

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## 8.4 SOME IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

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The first issue is how much importance we should attach to phonology, sound discrimination and pronunciation teaching. Some teachers are in favour of giving



a prominent place to pronunciation teaching in L2. Emphasis on correct pronunciation in early stages of learning may save hard work on remedial teaching later.

Others feel greater importance should be given to developing spontaneity and fluency in speech. They contend that pronunciation habits are not so firmly established in the first years that they may not be rectified later.

There is no convincing evidence or argument in favouring one or the other position on the merits of pronunciation teaching. However, we would like to add here that language competence also has an effective component. This suggests that learners must emotionally come to accept the target language and its challenges, whether in individual sounds, overall sound patterns or intonation patterns of the new language. Unless he can overcome the strangeness of the pronunciation demands of the new language, he will face difficulty in mastering almost any other aspect of the language, e.g. its grammar, vocabulary, writing system, and so on.

The general opinion is that pronunciation is never unimportant. However, at what level of teaching/learning you will introduce pronunciation teaching and at what level of accuracy of pronunciation you will pitch your objective, will vary for different types of courses.

### **8.4.1 OBJECTIVES OF PRONUNCIATION TEACHING**

When we decide to teach pronunciation, we must be clear about the objectives of such teaching. We may state our objectives in the following manner: i) the learner should be able to recognize and discriminate significant sound features, ii) he should be able to produce sounds in an intelligible and acceptable manner – both in segments and suprasegmentals (i.e. using correct stress and intonation), iii) he should be able to interpret written language phonologically (read aloud) and recreate spoken language graphically (e.g. taking dictation, note taking). As has already been mentioned, rather than aiming to produce a native-like pronunciation, we should aim at intelligibility and acceptability using a model of clear and careful diction. Our learners should also be able to distinguish between casual, formal or declamatory speech and identify and understand slight social or regional variants of L2. However, learners who aim at a higher level of phonological competence as language teachers or interpreters should attempt to achieve mastery over a wider range of speech varieties.



## 8.4.2 SYLLABUS FOR PRONUNCIATION TEACHING

Teaching of pronunciation should be a continuous process within a language syllabus. It does not help if an intensive course of pronunciation teaching is followed by a period of neglect. On the other hand, the learners may not find it easy to deal with a number of sound features in a new language at a time. It has to be a gradual process and must be taken together with other language activities. A pronunciation syllabus should be taken together with a grammatical and lexical syllabus. Into this syllabus newer and larger number of sound features should be slowly introduced keeping in mind the level of the learners.

As discourse analysis tells us, speech sounds are produced in a continuous chain. In a discourse, the individual sounds are influenced by preceding as well as following sounds. Under the circumstances vowels and consonants are sometimes treated at a later stage in the presentation while the earlier units deal with intonation, syllable, stress and rhythm.

Another practice is sometimes followed these days when the learners are exposed to varieties of speech from different speakers and varied situations. This is to make them aware of gestures, facial expressions, body postures, etc. which are part of regular speech. These activities will form the part of the course, i.e. during regular speaking and listening activities. The focus of these activities is the attention to sound features which may not be focussed on in ordinary communication.

The assumption in the above activities is that being able to perceive a sound will make the learner produce that sound. Though it is true that we cannot produce a sound feature that we cannot perceive, it is also true that we do not automatically produce a sound feature that we are able to perceive. However, learners should be given opportunities to absorb sound features through exposure besides having opportunities to produce and practise producing these features through repetition of meaningful speech in relevant situations.

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## 8.5 SUMMING UP

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Pronunciation has to be taught so that the learners can produce a sound pattern intelligible to native speakers. Unless the learners have very specific needs for acquiring native-like pronunciation, intelligibility should be the main criterion. Whether you allow your learners to develop fluent and spontaneous speech habits before you deal with correct pronunciation, will have to be decided by specific

objectives and needs. We would like to emphasize here that fluency is an important criterion which cannot be neglected. Fluency practice and pronunciation teaching may be taken up simultaneously with a syllabus suitable for the purpose.

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## 8.6 EXERCISE

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1. What should you consider when you choose a standard of pronunciation to teach?
2. Write a brief note on the changing trends of pronunciation teaching from the 1940's through the 90's.
3. Discuss the contribution of sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics to pronunciation teaching.
4. Identify at least two problem areas each in the consonant and vowel sound features that your students find difficult to master.

How would you correct these problems? Suggest two exercises for each of these areas.

5. What are the objectives of pronunciation teaching? Suggest objectives from your own experience and for your own needs.
6. Suggest ways of achieving the objectives you have mentioned in answer to Question 5.
7. What would you consider a useful and workable syllabus for your students while teaching pronunciation?

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## 8.7 GLOSSARY

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### **accent**

i) greater emphasis on a syllable so that it stands out from the other syllables in a word;

ii) a particular way of speaking which tells the listener something about the speaker's background.

### **accuracy**

refers to the ability to produce grammatically correct sentences but may not include the ability to speak or write fluently.

**affricate**

a speech sound (a constant) which is produced by stopping the airstream from the lungs, and then slowly releasing it with friction. The first part of an affricate is similar to a stop, the second part is similar to a fricative.

**alveolar**

describes a speech sound (a consonant) which is produced by the front of the tongue touching the gum ridge behind the upper teeth (the alveolar ridge).

**aspiration**

the little puff of air that sometimes follows a speech sound.

**audio-lingual method**

a method of foreign or second language teaching which

i) emphasizes the teaching of speaking and listening before reading and writing

ii) uses dialogues and drills

iii) discourages use of the mother tongue in the classroom

iv) often makes use of the contrastive analysis. This method was prominent in the 1950's and 60's.

**auditory discrimination**

the ability to hear and recognize sounds in a language. In particular the ability to recognize the different phonemes, and the different stress and intonation patterns.

**contrastive analysis**

the comparison of the linguistic systems of two languages, for example, the sound system or the grammatical system.

**dialect**

a variety of a language spoken in one part of a country (regional dialect), or by the people belonging to a particular social class (social dialect) which is different in some words, grammar, and/or pronunciation from other forms of the same language. A dialect is often associated with a particular accent.

**discourse**

a general term for examples of language use, i.e. language which has been produced as the result of an act of communication. Whereas grammar refers to

rules a language uses to form grammatical units such as clause, phrase or sentence, discourse refers to larger units of language such as paragraphs, conversations, interviews, etc.

### **drill**

a commonly used technique for practising sounds or sentence patterns in a language, based on guided repetition or practice. A drill which practises some aspect of grammar or sentence formation is often known as pattern practice.

### **fluency**

the features which give the speech the qualities of being natural and normal. In second and foreign language teaching, fluency describes a level of proficiency in communication, which includes the ability to produce written/spoken language with ease, the ability to speak with good but not necessarily perfect command of intonation, vocabulary and grammar, the ability to communicate ideas effectively, the ability to produce continuous speech without breakdown in communication.

### **fricative**

a speech sound (a consonant) which is produced by allowing the airstream from the lungs to escape with friction. This is caused by bringing the two articulators, e.g. upper teeth and lower lip close together but not close enough to stop the airstream completely.

### **labial**

describes a pronunciation in which either one or both lips are used.

### **minimal pair**

two words in a language which differ from each other by only one distinctive sound (one phoneme) and which also differ in meaning.

### **nasal**

describes a speech sound (consonant or vowel) which is produced by stopping the airstream from the lungs at some place in the mouth, for example, by closing the lips and letting the air escape through the nose.

### **plosive**

a speech sound (a consonant) which is produced by stopping the airstream from the lungs and then suddenly releasing it.

**stress**

the pronunciation of a word or syllable with more force than the surrounding words or syllables, i.e. when it is produced by using more air from the lungs. Syllables may be stressed or unstressed. A listener hears a stressed word or syllable as being louder and/or of longer duration than the surrounding words or syllables.

**syllabus (also curriculum)**

a description of the contents of a course of instruction and the order in which they are to be taught.

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## Unit 9 □ Theories of Discourse

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### Structure

#### 9.0 What is "Text"

#### 9.1 The Text and the Reader — Derrida

#### 9.2 Discourse and Performance — Foucault

#### 9.3 Review Question

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### 9.0 What is Text?

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To understand discourse, let us first make out the notion of text. Let us cite quotations from Derrida and Barthes:

"A text is not a text, unless it hides from the first comer, from first glances from the law of its composition, the rules of the game. A text remains, moreover, forever imperceptible. Its law and its rules are not, however harbored, in the inaccessibility of a secret; it is simply that they can never be booked, in the present, into anything that could rigorously be called a perception"— Derrida (1981:63).

"Text means Tissue; but whereas hitherto we have always taken this tissue as a product, a ready-made veil, behind which lies, more or less hidden, meaning (truth), we are now emphasizing, in the tissue, the generative idea that the text is made, is worked out in a perpetual interweaving; lost in this tissue — the texture — the subject unmakes himself (sic.), like a spider dissolving in the constructive secretions of its web. Were we fond of neologisms, we might define the theory of the text as an hyphology ('hypos' is the tissue and the spider's web)"— Barthes (1975:64).

A text is not merely an unknowable object but it is a historical object that is, a text is fixed in a specific historical context, which is in fact an inseparable entity. In this way the discursive formation (i.e. formation of discourse; which is something in between two silences; sometimes silences are also part of the discourse according to their contexts) of text is related to some non-discursive formations like nationalism, colonialism, which are hidden inside and outside of the text. Archaeology reveals these relations between discursive formations and non-discursive domains (institutions, political events, economic practices and processes) through rapprochements (Foucault 1972:162).

To understand or to know a text is to interrogate a text and one must question its presupposed stability, integrity, and continuity. The archaeologist, like an investigator, tries to unfold the veiled text by asking questions like these:

1. Who writes the text?
2. For whom is this text written?
3. What is the subject-matter?
4. How is it written?
5. Why is it written?
6. When is it written?
7. Where is it written?
8. Who is the distributor of the text?

Question No. 1 deals with the producer/sender of the text whereas question No. 2 concentrates on the receiver/consumer of the text, which is written in a given space (Question No. 7) and time (Question No. 6).

The relation between this sender/receiver is interrupted by a mediator, who is the distributor of the book (Question No. 8). This intervention may create a complex relation between consumer and producer of the text, which is not as 'ideal' [as Chomsky presumes, (1965)] as speaker-hearer relation. As the incidence of writing text (Question No. 5) is determined, controlled, appropriated by the nature of institutional distribution of the text, there is no question of institutionalized consumer-producer to become 'ideal'. Instead of ideal creative relation between producer-consumer of a message, a commodity, a text, intervention of institutionalized ideology inverses the situation: the 'ideal' has become real and real has become apparent. Thus the interplay of appearance and reality or between 'ideal' and 'real' creates myth. The position of text as an inversed object, a commodity, in the market is at a time true and unreal, at a time perceptible and imperceptible (a la Barthes and Marx).

The text as a commodity embodies the labour of a producer. In certain historical conditions, the labour of the producer assumes a socialized form of value of labour and satisfies the requirements of consumers, who obtain commodity through exchange. Value as Marx wrote (1887/1986:79), "converts every product into a social hieroglyphic ...". Later on, we try to decipher the hieroglyphic, to get behind the secret of our own social products: "for to stamp an object of utility as a value, is just as much a social product, as language."

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## 9.1 The Text and the Reader — Derrida

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As an investigator, a reader of the text may try to wipe off this impression in the level of its connotation. In a given text, as Barthes pointed out, the whole of the denotative signs is used as the signifier of connotative sign, e.g. the photographic image (denotative sign) of a Negro saluting a French flag in a French magazine is invaded by the second level of connotative meaning at the

time of the Algerian war of independence – “colonialism must be right: there are Negroes perfectly willing to defend it to the death.” We have seen in a T.V. advertisement that Sachin and Kamble were fighting over a bottle of cold-drinks. However, Azaharuddin, in the mean time, took the cold-drinks bottle and drank it. The obvious economic interpretation (denotation) is that the then “costly” players were used to selling a commodity. However, a man from a definite political party, (to my utter bewilderment) said that, when a high-class Brahmin (Sachin) and a dalit Hindu (Kamble) are fighting with each other, Muslims are gaining. This way of seeing things jeopardizes the denotative meaning and triggers nasty and filthy political games.

The whole enterprise of signifiers (denotative signifier and inverted connotative signifier) creates the myth and is linked with the ideology preached by the state apparatus. The fetish reader of text does not recode/decode these signifiers. S/he either enjoys/binds to enjoy or rejects a text out of boredom. So there may be a disposable text, i.e. read and throw away a text, or infinitely explore a text in its plurality.

When a reader-consumer reads a discourse of text, the writer/producer is no longer alive. (This is what is known as “death of author hypothesis” as proposed by Barthes and Foucault). S/he is dead, ceases to exist in front of the consumer’s open interpretation. But this openness is not, of course, opened free play of text. The plurality of text does not rest upon readers’ consideration of text as leaking of all sides and can be drowned confusedly in the undifferentiated generality of its element. Instead, it rests upon the notion of intertextuality: discourses are ‘stratified’, they bear along with them a whole network of articulated themes and assumptions whose meaning everywhere links with other texts, other genres or topics of discourse. This is what Derrida calls the ‘disseminating’ force, which is always at work within the language. Though ‘writing’ is intertextual, it is not wholesale intertextuality that could be deciphered according to the sweet will of a licensed reader. S/he is constrained by the technology of a writer/producer. The author may create his/her discourse following other preceding discourses if s/he is not a founder of discursive formation. The stability of the author is at stake. When this homogeneity of an author is questioned, a single author ceases to exist; so it is a switch over from ‘X thought that ...’ to ‘it was thought that ...’ (Foucault 1973:xiii); it is a switch over from the biography of an individual author and particular science to the field of epistemology. Epistemology can be defined as that which studies the growth conditions of possibility and validity of knowledge. Episteme is the “total set of relations that unite at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to epistemological figures, sciences, and possibly formalize system” (Foucault 1972:191).

The discussion so far follows mainly the path of two divergent founders of discourse, viz. Foucault and Derrida. Said pointed out (Said 1991: 183) the difference between them in one proposition, "Derrida's criticism moves us into the text, Foucault's in and out". On the one hand, we have the deconstructionist strategy, on the other hand we have the method of archaeological digging in the field of epistemology. Quite contrary to Said's statement, Norris, in course of discussing Derrida's 'Nuclear Criticism' (Norris 1987 : 168-99), observed that Derrida's deconstructionist strategy does not confine only "within" the text, but also asserts the principles of reason and reality "outside" the text. Following Kantian tradition of enlightenment, Derrida's project converges with the critical theory of Habermas, whose critical theory of emancipatory discourse opens up a new bridge between discursive and non-discursive formation (cf. Ch. 5).

## 9.2 Discourse and Performance — Foucault

Performance, according to Foucault (1972:107), is any group of sciences produced on the basis of a natural or artificial language by which this individual act reveals on any material and according to a particular form is called formulation in a given spatiotemporal co-ordinates. I do not here consider 'sentence' following Foucault, as a unit of grammar or logic as grammar considers sentence as potentially infinite, but in performance level, in practice, sentence obliges endness: it is reduced to an utterance. This utterance constitutes statement, "the modality of existence proper to that group of signs" (Ibid).

This modality "allows statements to be in relation with a domain of objects, to prescribe a definite position to any possible subject, situated among other performances" (Ibid). Discourse denotes a group of verbal performance, which is produced by the group of signs. Discourse is acts of formulations, a series of sentences or propositions, and particular modalities of existence. The law of such series is called discursive formation, which is the principle of dispersion and redistribution of statements that belong to a single system of formation. The archaeological method, as Said (1983:186) observed, is supposed to reveal how discourse – impersonal, systematic, highly regulated by enunciative formations – overrides society and formation of culture. Thus discourse is governed by the archive.

Foucault (1972:64) pointed out that discourse gives rise to certain organizations of concepts, certain regroupings of objects, certain type of enunciation, which form the themes on theories according to their coherence, rigour and stability. These themes and theories in different epistemes are called discursive strategies. Archaeological method discovers how the strategies are distributed in history according to theoretical choices and options.



In this Unit different antithetical concepts are amalgamated to search a methodology for analysing text. The archaeological method does not only enquire, the covert discourse, absent or hidden behind the text, it also reveals the nature of ignored visibility, which escapes the perception of the reader of the text. This is almost like Brechtian theatre where process of alienation is employed to uncover the visible fact. It is the positive unconsciousness, of the reader/spectator, instead of the negative one, that is under the focus of archaeology.

When one is going into the text, s/he may deconstruct the text seeking out aporias, "blindspots or moments of self-contradictions where a text involuntarily betrays the tension between rhetoric and logic, between what it manifestly means to say and what it is nonetheless constrained to mean. To 'deconstruct' a piece of writing is therefore to operate a kind of strategic reversal seizing on precisely those unregarded details (casual metaphors, footnotes, incidental turns of argument) which are always, and necessarily, passed over by interpreters of a more orthodox persuasion." (Norris 1987:19). This deconstructionist strategy opens up the Grammatological domain by supplementing Linguistics. Grammatology, with the help of deconstruction, tries to grasp the undecidability of text by not merely inverting the tension between literal and metaphorical or other such oppositions, but by determining the "literal" meaning of writing as metaphoricity itself.

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### 9.3 Review Question

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1. What is "Text"? How do you analyse discourse of a text?

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### 9.4 Bibliography

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## Unit 10 □ Discourse

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### Structure

#### 10.0 Objectives

#### 10.1 Introduction — What is Discourse?

#### 10.2 Content of Discourse

#### 10.3 Forms of Discourse

#### 10.4 Language Functions

#### 10.5 Implications

#### 10.6 Summing up

#### 10.7 Bibliography

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### 10.0 Objectives

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At the end of this unit you will be able to —

- define the term discourse
- describe the content of discourse
- indentify forms of discourse
- identify and describe language functions.

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### 10.1 Introduction — What is Discourse?

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Language, we will all agree, is unique to the human race. The use of language in various forms determines relationships and gives meaning to the interaction. The value of the use of language in human civilization cannot be ruled out. Cultural histories have been created by the use of language. Language has been used to transmit information and give shape and utterance to those finer aspects of the human intellect which distinguish man from all other living beings. Thus, we all believe that it is language which has enabled the human race to develop diverse cultures, religious observances, laws, oral traditions, patterns of trading and so on. It is also true that the acquisition of written language has permitted the development within cultures of philosophy, science and literature. This development has been made possible by the ability to transfer information through the use of language which has enabled man to utilize the knowledge of his forebears and the knowledge of other men in other cultures. Thus analysis of language use over the years has revealed two aspects — *content* and *expression*. A combination of these two aspects results in speech or written form of

communication. When we construct a piece of connected speech or writing, whether in monologue or dialogue we are constantly tapping the lexical and grammatical resources of language to find ways of making our composition flow fluently while at the same time expressing the nuances we wish to convey. Any such connection between lexis and structure constitutes discourse.

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## 10.2 Content of Discourse

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As we have seen in the previous section, discourse occurs to transmit information. It thus occurs between at least two parties. Discourse thus has a context and topic within which we study discourse.

Context of a situation has some features. In speech events, for example, there is the presence of an addressor and an addressee. The addressor is the speaker or writer who produces the utterance. The addressee is the hearer or reader who is the recipient of the utterance. Knowledge of the addressor in a given speech act makes it possible to predict what that particular person is likely to say. For example, if you know that the speaker is the Prime Minister of the country and is addressing a public gathering, or the President of a Finance Company is addressing a group of shareholders, you will have different expectations of the sort of language which will be produced. If you have information about the setting both in terms of where the event is situated in place and time, as well as the relations of the interactants with respect to posture, gesture and facial expression, your expectations will be limited still further. A discussion on context will remain incomplete if we do not mention features such as channel (that is, how contact between the participants is maintained – by speech, writing etc.), code (that is, what language or dialect or style of language is being used), message form (that is chat, debate, sermon, etc.), and event (the nature of the communicative event within which a genre may be embedded; it means, for example, a sermon may be part of a larger event that is a Church service).

A discussion on content of discourse will remain incomplete without an understanding of what is the topic. There are different ways of looking at this question. Topic could be defined as sketches of talk bounded by certain transactional markers like *'by the way'*, *'to change the subject'* or phonological ones, like change in pitch. We can also define topic according to segments of talk in single word or phrasal titles like 'holidays' or 'buying a car' etc. We can also say that topic constitutes strings of utterances perceived as relevant to one another by participants in a talk. But for all practical purposes we as language teachers will express topic as the 'subject matter' of speech events. Topic can be

the reason for talk or they can arise because people are already talking.

### Review Questions I

1. What is discourse? Write briefly on contents of discourse.
2. Write short notes on—
  - (a) topic
  - (b) importance of language in human history.

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## 10.3 Forms of Discourse

By now you must have realized that 'discourse' is produced in speech or in writing. From the point of view of production spoken and written language make different demands on language producers. The speaker, for example, uses a range of paralinguistic moves to convey his message. The speaker controls, not just his utterances but also processes and plans response to queries put to him. He is responsible simultaneously for not only his performance but also for what his hearer receives. Also, in the process of a live speech act there is no record of what was said a minute ago. It is not permanent. The writer, on the other hand, may look over what he has already written. He may pause between each word with no fear of his interlocutor interrupting him. He may choose to rewrite and repair at his own pace his piece of writing as and where he feels necessary. The importance of written language can be judged from the functions it performs. Goody suggests that it has the following two main functions, They are —

- (1) Storage function — which permits communication over time and space.
- (2) It shifts language from the oral to the visual domain and permits words and sentences to be examined out of their original contexts, "where they appear in a very different and highly abstract context" (1997:78).

It thus seems that in daily life situations we use speech largely to establish and maintain human relationships, and use the written language mostly to transmit information.

Having discussed the written and spoken forms of language production let us list their features.

- (a) the syntax of spoken language is typically much less structured than that of written language.
  - i. Spoken language contains many incomplete sentences, often simply sequences of phrases.
  - ii. Spoken language typically contains rather little subordination.

- iii. In conversational speech, where sentential syntax can be observed, active declarative forms are normally found. In over 50 hours of recorded conversational speech, Brown, Currie and Kenworthy (1980) found very few examples of passives, it-clefts or wh-clefts. Crystal (1980) also presents some of the problems encountered in attempting to analyse spontaneous speech in terms of categories like sentence and clause.

As a brief example, notice how this speaker pauses and begins each new 'sentence' before formally completing the previous one:

*It's quite nice the Grassmarket since + It's always had the antique shops but they're looking + they're short of em + become a bit nicer + ...*

- (b) In written language an extensive set of metalingual markers exists to mark relationships between clauses (that complementisers, when/while temporal markers, so-called 'logical connectors' like *besides*, *moreover*, *however*, *in spite of*, etc.), in spoken language the largely paratactically organized chunks are related by *and*, *but*, *then*; more rarely, by *if*. The speaker is typically less explicit than the writer: I'm so tired (because) I had to walk all the way home. In written language rhetorical organizers of larger stretches of discourse appear, like *firstly*, *more important than* and *in conclusion*. These are rare in spoken language.
- (c) In written language, rather heavily premodified noun phrases (*like*, *that*, *on*) are quite common – it is rare in spoken language to find more than two premodifying adjectives and there is a strong tendency to structure the short chunks of speech so that only one predicate is attached to a given referent at a time (simple case-frame or one-place predicate) as in: it's biggish cat + tabby + with torn ears, or in: old man McArthur + he was a wee chap + oh very small + and eh a beard + and he was pretty stooped.

The packaging of information related to a particular referent can, in the written language, be very concentrated, as in the following news item:

*Man who turned into a human torch ten days ago after snoozing in his locked car while smoking his pipe has died in hospital.*

[Evening News (Edinburgh), 22 April 1982]

- (d) Whereas in written language sentences are generally structured in subject – predicate form, in spoken language it is quite common to find what Givón (1979) calls topic-comment structure, as in the cats + did you let them out.



- (e) In informal speech, the occurrence of passive constructions is relatively infrequent. That use of the passive in written language which allows non-attribution of agency is typically absent from conversational speech. Instead, active constructions with indeterminate group agents are noticeable, as in:

*Oh everything they do in Edinburgh + they do it far too slowly.*

- (f) In chat about the immediate environment, the speaker may rely on (e.g.) gaze direction to supply a referent: (looking at the rain) Frightful isn't it?
- (g) The speaker may replace or refine expressions as he goes along: this man + this chap she was going out with ...
- (h) The speaker typically uses a good deal of rather generalized vocabulary: a lot of, got, do, thing, nice, stuff, place and things like that.
- (i) The speaker frequently repeats the same syntactic form several times over, as this fairground inspector does: I look at fire extinguishers + I look at fire exits + I look at what gangways are available + I look at electric cables that + are they properly earthed + are they properly covered.
- (j) The speaker may produce a large number of prefabricated 'fillers': well, erm, I think, you know, if you see what I mean, of course, and so on.

Some of the typical distinctions between discourse which has been written and that which has been spoken can be seen in the following two descriptions of a rainbow. (No direct comparison is intended, since the two pieces of discourse were produced in strictly non-comparable circumstances for very different purposes.)

- (1) And then, in the blowing clouds, she saw a band of faint iridescence colouring in faint shadows a portion of the hill. And forgetting, startled, she looked for the hovering colour and saw a rainbow forming itself. In one place it gleamed fiercely, and, her heart anguished with hope, she sought the shadow of iris where the bow should be. Steadily the colour gathered, mysteriously, from nowhere, it took presence upon itself, there was a faint, vast rainbow.

(D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, ch. 16)

In the first extract (1), the rich lexis and well-organized structure indicate that the writer has taken time in the construction, and possibly reconstruction after several rewritings, of the final product. There are complete sentences, containing subordinations, frequent mediations via adjectives and adverbs, and more than a single predicate per referential expression. In extract (2), there are frequent pauses, often interrupting major syntactic units, repetitions, incomplete sentences, generalized vocabulary, fillers and one example of a tongue-slip.

- (2) Normally after + very heavy rain + or something like that + and + you're



driving along the road + and + far away + you see + well + er + a series + of + stripes + + formed like a bow + an arch + + very very far away + ah + seven colours but + + I guess you hardly ever see seven it's just a + a series of + colours which + they seem to be separate but if you try to look for the separate (kaz)-colours they always seem + very hard + to separate + if you see what I mean ++

(Postgraduate student speaking informally) (Brown and Yule 1983).

## Review Question 2

1. What are the two main functions that written discourse performs? List five features of spoken form of discourse.

## 10.4 Language Functions

Language, as we have seen has form and function. For example, a piece of news item which is broadcast has the specific function of informing people or listeners. Or, for example, a customer at a bank's "May I help you?" counter performs the specific function of asking for information. Thus, in a sense when we use language, we use it to perform functions. And when we talk about language functions, we are concerned with what we do with language. Thus, at various points of our interactions with members of society we use language to request, suggest, supply information, give directions or even to introduce ourselves. These are some of the functions that language performs. Language functions are entities in language use and carry with them distinct language items. Thus, for example, in the request –

"May I have a banana please?", the modal "may" stands crucial in framing the request even though put in a question form. Similarly, the use of the -ing form of the verb in the description –

"It is raining now", is crucial in performing the function of describing; in this context describing the moment one is placed in. Or, for example, the use of the -ed form of the verb –

"Sudha Chandran danced yesterday", conveys the sense of reporting a past-event and as such this inflexion performs the function of reporting an event.

We may list some other language functions such as – giving opinion, giving and taking messages, expressing likes and dislikes, giving instructions etc.

## Review Question 3

Given below is a table. Match the functions with the exchanges:

**Exchange****Functions**

- |     |                                                                                                                                                  |                        |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| I   | A : It's a hot day!<br>B : Shall I give you a glass of water?                                                                                    | Request                |
| II  | A : Can you lend me a pen, please?<br>B : Certainly.                                                                                             | Giving opinion         |
| III | A : Which book do you think I should<br>buy? Sidney Sheldon or Ken Follet?<br>B : Ken Follet perhaps if you're looking<br>for espionage stories. | Suggestion             |
| IV  | A : How about having an ice cream<br>after lunch?<br>B : I'd prefer a lime juice instead.                                                        | Expressing preferences |
| V   | A : I'm Rita, I'm studying B.A. How about you?<br>B : I'm Sanjay. I work in a bank.                                                              | Introduction           |

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**10.5 Implications**

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In the preceding sections we have discussed discourse, the contents of discourse, channels of communication, their features. We have also talked of language functions. What implication do all these have for language teachers? Language teachers have concentrated on vocabulary of topics and this actually makes sense. It is so because without vocabulary it is not possible to talk about a topic. The association between the lexical and related associated coherent devices can best be understood through an effective use of vocabulary to exploit the topic. But knowledge of discourse as discussed in this unit can enable a teacher to practice interactive features of topics and encourage students to react to the same. Listening and speaking activities can raise learners' awareness of how speakers mark topic shifts. This can be achieved by developing activities that focus on points where speakers summarize or use markers and change pitch. To recreate real life situations is difficult. However, games with preordained list of topics may prompt students in establishing links between subject matters and responding orally to them. The challenge in designing such activities will be in ensuring that there is proper participation in the classroom. Also, ensuring sufficient level of reciprocity among learners might be a challenge considering the large numbers in our classrooms, which necessarily implies a wide range of abilities among students.

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## 10.6 Summing Up

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In this unit you have learnt about discourse and its contents. Any meaningful connection between lexis and structure constitute discourse. Topic, addressor and addressee are the contents of discourse. You have learnt about written and spoken channels of communication, and how language changes its form depending upon purpose and intent.

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## Unit 11 □ Discourse Analysis

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### Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction — What is Discourse Analysis?
- 11.2 Notion of Text : Spoken and Written
- 11.3 Structure of Conversation
- 11.4 Interpreting Written Texts
- 11.5 Implications for Language Teachers
- 11.6 Summing up
- 11.7 Comprehension Questions
- 11.8 Bibliography

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### 11.0 Objectives

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At the end of this unit you will be able to –

- Define discourse analysis.
- Distinguish between text types: spoken and written.
- Analyse the structure of a conversation.
- Interpret written texts.

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### 11.1 Introduction – What is discourse analysis?

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Discourse analysis is concerned with the study of the relationship between language and the contexts in which it is used. It grew out of the work in different disciplines in the 1960s and 1970s. These disciplines included linguistics, semiotics, psychology, anthropology and sociology. Discourse analysis is a study of language in use; written texts of all kinds, spoken data – from conversation to highly institutionalized forms of talk.

#### Historical background

At a time when linguists were concerned with the analysis of single sentences, Zellig Harris published a paper titled "Discourse analysis" (1952). Harris was interested in the distribution of linguistic elements in texts and the relation between the text and its social context. Also important in the early years was the emergence of Semiotics and the French structuralist approach to the study of narrative. In the 1960s, Dell Hymes provided a sociological perspective with the study of speech in its social setting. Linguistic philosophers such as Austin (1962), Searle (1969) and Grice (1975) were also influential in the study of



language as social action. Their contribution resulted in the **speech act theory** and the formulation of conversational maxims alongwith the emergence of **pragmatics** which is the study of meaning in context.

British discourse analysis was greatly influenced by M.A.K. Halliday's functional approach to language. Halliday's framework emphasizes the social functions of language and the Thematic and informational structure of speech and writing. Also important in Britain were Sinclair and Courthard (1975) at the University of Birmingham who developed a model for the description of teacher-pupil talk.

American discourse analysis has been dominated by work within the ethno-methodological tradition which emphasizes on close observation of groups of people communicating in natural settings. It examines types of speech events such as story telling, greeting, rituals and verbal duels in different cultural and social settings. What is often called 'conversation analysis' within the American tradition can also be included under the heading 'discourse analysis'. The works of Goffman (1963) and Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) are important in the study of conversational norms, turn taking and other aspects of spoken interaction. Alongside the conversation analysts, working within the sociolinguistic tradition, investigation of oral story telling has also contributed to the history of narrative discourse. The American work has produced a large number of descriptions of discourse types.

### **Review Question 1**

1. What is discourse analysis?
2. Write in brief about M.A.K. Halliday's contribution to discourse analysis.
3. Why is the work of discourse analysts like Goffman and Sacks important?

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## **11.3 Notion of Text : Spoken and Written**

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To be able to arrive at an understanding of text, let us first distinguish between discourse and text. Traditionally, the distinction between discourse and text was similar to that between spoken and written language. However, that distinction has eroded over the years primarily because of the increasing range of forms which written and spoken material has taken in modern media as well as the way theoretical perspectives have evolved. Although some authors still use the terms 'text' and 'discourse' in interchangeable or contradictory way, many have now adopted the term 'text' to refer to the outward material form of a language event and 'discourse' to refer to the more complex interaction between participants, text and context. We may thus say that text is a technical term which refers to the verbal record of a communicative act. However, this kind of an objective definition of 'text' involves two aspects. They are (a) representation of the text presented for discussion of the discourse considered by the discourse analyst for analysis; and (b) features of the original production of the language,



that is shaky handwriting or quavering speech are somewhat arbitrarily considered as features of the text rather than features of the context within which the language is produced. Having discussed what 'text' is all about, let us now point out some differences between the spoken and the written channels of communication.

| <i>The oral channel</i>                                                                                    | <i>The written channel</i>                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Sounds                                                                                                  | Letters                                                                                                                                             |
| 2. Intonation patterns, changes in pitch and stress to convey attitudes and some grammatical distinctions. | No direct counterpart, though underlining words, parentheses, punctuation (e.g. exclamation marks) and capital letters can convey similar meanings. |
| 3. Non-verbal gestures, eye contact                                                                        | No direct counterpart, though different types of handwritings might express similar meanings.                                                       |
| 4. No direct equivalents, though changes in pitch and speed may express equivalent meanings.               | Punctuation marks such as dashes, question marks and dots; different types of handwriting or typefaces.                                             |
| 5. Pauses and silence                                                                                      | Gaps and dashes                                                                                                                                     |
| 6. Expressions to indicate topic changes, e.g. right then, now.                                            | Headings, new chapters, paragraphs, etc. words like firstly, in conclusion.                                                                         |
| 7. No direct equivalent                                                                                    | Capital letters for names and beginning of sentences.                                                                                               |
| 8. Gap-fillers, e.g. you know ... er                                                                       | Hesitations not shown in final form of writing.                                                                                                     |
| 9. Checks on listener attention and to maintain interaction such as "Do you know what I mean?"             | Perhaps less common but checks on reader involvement employed, e.g. try to bear in mind: if you have followed my arguments so far.                  |

### 11.3 Structure of Conversation

Language, as we all know is a systematic organization of sounds, words and sentences. One of the forms of expression of such a systematic organization is our speech acts or conversation. Conversations too, like writing, are structures; that is they have a beginning, a middle and an end. They are also structured

in the sense that not anything can follow anything in a conversation. Read the following exchanges -

I : A telephone conversation

Caller - Is that six two seven one seven zero nine?

Caller - Which number have you dialed?

II : At a bank counter

Customer : Can I have a deposit slip, please?

Bank person : Good morning, May I help you?

Do you notice how incongruent the above exchanges are? That is because the utterances do not logically follow each other. Such a structural incongruence makes the exchanges funny and unacceptable.

Let us now look at those aspects that make a conversation complete.

#### **(a) Conversational Openings**

There are many ways of opening a conversation. We can start the conversation without any preliminaries. As for example, we can say, "When will the bus arrive?" Or we can open a conversation with the help of a vocation or attention getter like "Excuse me", "Hey". We can also begin a conversation with a greeting like "Hello" or "How nice to see you" and so on. Though the act of opening a conversation is common to almost all communities yet the possibilities of opening a conversation may vary from one community to another. As for example, a contrastive analysis of phone call beginnings conducted in the United States and France indicated that phone call beginnings are much more direct in the United States than in France. In France, the caller was expected to check the number, identify himself or engage in polite conversation with whoever answered the call.

#### **(b) The main body of the conversation**

After the opening of a conversation comes the main body of the conversation. This may vary in length. In some cases, it may not exist at all. This will happen if the opening is directly followed by a closing. In most of the cases, however, this is not the case. In between the opening and the closing lies the main body of the conversation in which topics are raised, questions answered, interruptions made etc. This sort of an overall smooth running of a speech activity involves co-ordination of both participants in the speech act. This co-ordination can be achieved with the help of turn taking. How exactly does this turn taking take place? It does not happen when one speaker tells another one "My turn is over. You can speak now". To visualize such a situation is unnatural. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) laid down three principles for turn taking. They were -

- (i) That the current speaker selects the next speaker by, for example, asking a question to someone in particular.

- (ii) In cases where the speaker does not select the next speaker, it does not imply that the hearers need to select the next speaker. The person who speaks next automatically becomes the speaker.
- (iii) If the current speaker does not select the next speaker and if no hearer opts to be the next speaker then the current speaker need not continue.

A hearer may self select himself for the next turn either when the current speaker gives a signal that he is ending his turn. This he does by either asking a question or by lowering his pitch or by some hand gesture. Such signals are called turn yielding signals. However, it may not always be possible for a learner to wait for turn yielding signals. People employ different strategies for interrupting. They may be for example, starting on a higher pitch level than the current speaker or using certain negative words like 'but' or 'no' although they have nothing contradictory to say. This is also known as butting in. Just as conversational openings show cultural differences so also turn taking strategies exhibit cultural differences. What is acceptable to one society might not be acceptable to another.

### **(c) The Closing of a conversation**

All conversations that begin must come to an end. Sacks et al. refer to this part as the "closing section". This section too, is marked by certain characteristics. Before the speakers part ways by closing a conversation, the conversation gives way to a pre-closing sequence. This sequence is marked by exchanges such as "Well it's been nice talking to you/Same here!" etc. This section is followed by the leave taking section in which speakers may reinvolve things just talked about, make arrangements for future contact, wish each other well etc. This section ends with a terminal exchange which consists of two adjacently positioned utterances, each produced by a different person.

### **The Cooperative Principle**

As mentioned earlier, conversation requires a coordinated effort of all involved in the act. Mere talk to produce sentences, does not constitute conversation. In this context it is worth quoting Grice who says, "Our talk exchange does not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks, and would not be rational if they did. They are characteristically to some degree at least, of cooperative efforts, and each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction". According to Grice, all the speakers are expected to make their conversational contribution as required for the purpose or direction of the talk exchange one is engaged in. He has called this as the Cooperative Principle and proposed four maxims or rules of conversation. These are -

#### **(a) Maxim of quantity**

This means giving the right amount of information. That is:

- Make your contribution as informative as is required by the current

purposes of the conversation.

- Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

**(b) Maxim of quality**

- Try to make your contribution truthful. That is –
- Do not say what you believe to be false.
- Do not say that for which you lack evidence.

**(c) Maxim of relevance**

This means that if for example someone asks you "Is that your sister?" reply either "yes" or "no"; not something like "I'm travelling to Paris next week".

**(d) Maxim of manner**

Under this maxim the following points are important:

- Avoid obscurity of expression
- Avoid ambiguity
- Be brief
- Be orderly.

**Review Questions 2**

1. List 5 major differences between spoken and written texts.
2. Read the following jumbled up conversation. Arrange it sequentially.  
A : What did he say about the Andamans?  
B : No.  
A : Funny ...  
B : Did he mention with whom he's going?  
A : Oh! he said he's going next month.  
B : Yes.  
A : Did you see Ajay?

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## **11.4 Interpreting Written Texts**

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Interpreting written texts is different from analysing spoken text forms. That is because in the spoken form we might have to contend with people, all speaking at the same time. But with the written form, the writer has had time to think about what to say and how to say. So, the sentences are usually well formed in a way that the utterances of natural, spontaneous talk are not. But the question still remains the same: what norms or rules do people adhere to when creating written texts? Are texts structured according to some principles? Is there a hierarchy of units comparable to moves and exchanges of openings and closings



of a conversation? As with spoken discourse, if there are such identifiable elements in written discourse and if such elements pose problems for learners, then insights of written discourse analysis might have implications for language teaching.

If you ask anyone what is language or what is the important feature of language, the answer will be, grammar. Following from this we may say that most texts display links from sentence to sentence in terms of grammatical features such as pronominalization, ellipsis and conjunction of various kinds. Well formed written texts exhibit how structuring of sentences has implications for units such as paragraphs and for the progression of the whole text. Such surface links between the clauses and sentences of a text is cohesion. Thus among the first points of analysis for written texts is cohesion. Secondly, a text is characterized by markers. These are linguistic signals of semantic and discourse functions (e.g. the - ed on the verb is a marker of pastness). Cohesive markers create links across sentence boundaries and pair and chain together items that are related.

We as readers are concerned with the business of interpreting texts. In doing so, we try and establish connection between various segments of the text. Thus, the third dimension to interpreting written texts is through relationships-phenomenon-reason/cause-consequence/cause-effect-relationship. This is best exemplified in the work of Winter (1977, 1978) and Hoey (1983). In establishing relationship between parts of a text we look out for signals and supporting evidence to interpret the text in discussion.

### Review Question 3

Read the following advertisement and list the problems and solutions.

DAMP WALLS, FLAKING PAINT,  
PEELING WALL PAPER, MUSTY SMELLS

Could mean ..... > Rising Damp

Rising DAMP if not treated effectively could cause extensive damage to your home, ruin decoration and furniture. Damp could also be a hazard to your health.

VINAY WALL GUARD

Guarantee to cure rising damp.

- 20 years guarantee
- Tried and tested internationally.

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## 11.5 Implications for Language Teachers

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Having discussed discourse analysis it is important for us to ponder on what the implications are for us language teachers especially in today's world where



the dimensions of language use are changing rapidly. We cannot remain orthodox in our approach to language teaching and insist on 'correct usage'. A knowledge of discourse analysis helps us as language teachers in enlightening ourselves about what people actually do with language when they speak or write. We no longer have to rely on classical text books for a knowledge of what constitutes 'good' usage. Discourse analysis is not a method of teaching language. It helps us know more about the delicate relationship between language forms and particular contexts and users, knowledge of which is immensely useful. In the light of this we can say that if discourse analysis were to be subjected to scrutiny with materials and classroom situations, it would prove a testing ground for a language teacher to rethink methods and techniques so far held sacred.

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## 11.6 Summing Up

In this unit you have learnt what discourse analysis is. You have also learnt about the historical factors that have shaped trends in discourse analysis. Important works of Halliday, Goffman, and Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson have been discussed in this unit. In this unit we have also seen how these works have determined the identification of discourse analysis, primarily with conversation analysis. You have also learnt about the structure of a conversation, that is conversation too has a beginning, a middle and an end. Grice's cooperative principles have also been discussed in this unit. Finally, this unit discussed how to analyse written texts as well. To analyse written texts we need to look out for cohesive devices, markers and established relationships between segments of a text identifying cause-effect relationships.

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## 11.7 Comprehension Questions

1. Write short notes on –
  - (a) Closing of a conversation
  - (b) Cooperative principles
  - (c) Turn taking.
2. What is 'text'? How do you analyse written texts?

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## Unit 12 □ Pragmatics

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### Structure

- 12.1 Aims and Objectives
- 12.2 Introduction
- 12.3 Topics in Pragmatics
  - 12.3.1 Brief history
  - 12.3.2 Definition
  - 12.3.3 Aspects of Pragmatics
    - 12.3.4.1 Speech Act Theory
    - 12.3.4.2 Felicity Conditions
    - 12.3.4.3 Conversational Implicature
    - 12.3.4.4 The Cooperative Principle
    - 12.3.4.5 Conversational Maxims
    - 12.3.4.6 Relevance
    - 12.3.4.7 Politeness
    - 12.3.4.8 Phatic Tokens
    - 12.3.4.9 Reference
    - 12.3.4.10 Deixis
- 12.4 Pragmatics and Language Teaching
- 12.5 Let us sum up
- 12.6 Self-Study Exercises
- 12.7 Further Reading
- 12.8 Answers
- 12.9 References

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### 12.1 Aims and Objectives

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This is the fourth unit of the Module entitled Discourse Theories. This is a part of your **PGELT Course**. Here, in this unit, we would discuss the principles of Pragmatics. By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Understand what pragmatics is
- Understand the basic concepts related to the pragmatic analysis of sentences
- Understand the importance of pragmatic analysis in linguistic studies
- Recognize the significance of pragmatic analysis in understanding an utterance in a language
- Use the principles of pragmatic analysis as a theoretical tool.

## 12.2 Introduction

Through various modules of your PGELT Course you have been exposed to a range of concepts and operations of grammar and syntactic principles of the English language. As you have observed those aspects of your course materials are enormously helpful in understanding the structure of the language. Since by now you have already been informed sufficiently about the structure of English language, you may, at the very outset, question the necessity of a unit either on Semantics or on Pragmatics. Why, in the first place, one should take the trouble of studying Pragmatics? Well, the answer could be that Semantics and Pragmatics, as Geoffrey Leech points out in the introduction of his book on Semantics, "(are) central to the study of communication." (ix).

A language is not merely structures. The ultimate aim of any language is to facilitate communication between its speakers, i.e. to convey meaning. The correct use of the formal systems of syntax and semantics does not of itself ensure that communication will be appropriate and effective. Such effectiveness is dependent on the relevance of what is said in the situational, the social and the linguistic context. Any speaker of a certain language does not derive meaning out of mere linguistic structures alone. Linguistic structures along with a whole array of cultural and extralinguistic conditions make sense. Pragmatics is the study of those extralinguistic contexts of utterance rather than its actual structures. The pragmatic principles people abide by in one language are often different in another. Here, you may ask the question whether there would be different sets of language-specific pragmatic rules for each language. Or, you might even feel skeptical about the very nature of pragmatics as a study of scientific order. As you proceed with your questions deep into the study of pragmatics you are sure to find a specific pattern in studying utterances of a particular language according to the norms laid by pragmatic principles and find out that everything – after all – are not as unrelated with each other as it appears to be and also that there are certain common principles which are fundamental to any pragmatic analysis of any language.

There has been a growing interest in how people in different languages observe a certain pragmatic principle. Cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies help us account for what is considered polite in one language is sometimes not polite in another. Contrastive pragmatics, however, is not confined to the study of certain pragmatic principles. Cultural breakdowns, Pragmatic failure among other things, are also components of cross-cultural pragmatics. In the following sections of this unit we are going to discuss a few salient features of the study of Pragmatics.



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## 12.3 Topics in Pragmatics

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### 12.3.1 Brief History

Pragmatics is a relatively new branch of linguistics. The term owes its origin to Latin *Pragmaticus* and Greek *Pragmaticos*, both meaning "being practical." In modern times the use and current practice of Pragmatics can be attributed to the influence of the American Philosophical doctrine of pragmatism. The pragmatic interpretation of semiotics and verbal communication studies in *Foundations of the Theory of Signs* by Charles Morris (1938), helped to a great extent expound the differences of mainstream enterprise in semiotics and linguistics. According to him Pragmatics studies the relations of signs to interpreters, while Semantics studies the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable and Syntax studies the formal relations of signs to one another.

Taking a queue from Morris, Grice (1975) opened up a new vista of possibility in modern treatment of meaning by distinguishing two kinds of meaning. Natural and non-natural by elaborating the sense of pragmatism in his concern of conversational meanings. Grice proposed that pragmatics should revolve around a more practical facet of meaning, namely the conversational meaning which was later formulated in a variety of innovative ways by Levinson and Geoffrey Leech in 1983. Practical concerns also helped shift pragmaticians' focus to explaining naturally occurring conversations which resulted in hallmark discoveries of the Cooperative Principle by Grice (1975) and the Politeness Principle by Leech (1983). Subsequently, Green (1989) explicitly defined pragmatics in terms of natural language understanding. The impact of pragmatism has led to crosslinguistic international studies of language use that lead to Sperber and Wilson's (1986) relevance theory which convincingly explains how people comprehend and utter a communicative act. The Anglo-American tradition of pragmatic study has been tremendously expanded and enriched with the involvement of researchers mainly from the Continental countries such as the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Belgium. A symbol of this development was the establishment of the IPrA (the International Pragmatic Association) in Antwerp in 1987. IPrA proposed to consider pragmatics as a theory of linguistic adaptation and look into language use from all dimensions in its Working Document (Verschuereen 1987). Henceforward, pragmatics has been conceptualized as to incorporate micro and macro components (Mey 1993). Throughout its development, pragmatics has been wrestling with the philosophical practice of pragmatism and struggling to maintain its independence as a linguistic sub-field by keeping to its territory of being practical in treating the everyday concerned meaning in conjunction with related sub-fields of linguistics.



### Check your progress 1

1. Trace the origin of the term 'Pragmatics'.
2. What does influence most the study of Pragmatics in modern times?
3. How does Morris differentiate between the mainstream enterprises of Pragmatics, Semantics and Syntax?
4. State briefly Grice's formulations about the study of Pragmatics.
5. What principle did Leech add to the study of Pragmatics?
6. What is the essence of the relevance theory?
7. What is the full form of IPrA?
8. What did IPrA propose the study of Pragmatics to be?

### 12.3.2 Definition

Let's begin with a workable definition of Pragmatics. A sub-field of linguistics developed in the late 1970s, pragmatics studies how people grasp and generate a communicative act or speech act in a concrete speech situation which is usually a conversation. It distinguishes two intents or meanings in each utterance or communicative act of verbal communication. One is the informative intent or the sentence meaning, and the other the communicative intent or speaker meaning (Leech 1983; Sperber and Wilson 1986). The ability to comprehend and produce a communicative act is referred to as pragmatic competence (Kasper 1997) which habitually includes one's knowledge about the social distance, social status between the speakers involved, the cultural knowledge such as politeness, and the linguistic competence, both explicit and implicit. Here, it would not be out of place to mention that apart from those above mentioned considerations, the study of pragmatics also takes into account physical facts like auditory conditions and acoustics of the venue where the conversation is taking place and other non-verbal details playing crucial parts in successful communication. According to David Crystal "Pragmatics studies the factors that govern our choice of language in social interaction and the effects of our choice on others." Can we, therefore, at the end of the above discussion, reformulate the definition of Pragmatics as the study of language use in particular situations?

Let us elucidate it a little more. Take a sentence like –"It is raining cats and dogs today"– which cannot be uttered at a time when it is not raining at all. Hence it can be said that we say the sentence in those contexts where it's true, and we don't say it in contexts where it's false. If language use boils down to a matter of *truth* and *falsehood*, then it looks like "the study of language use in particular contexts." But that's precisely what Semantics does. So why should we take the trouble of studying Pragmatics?

The simple answer to this question is that the situation of language use is

not as simple as labelling it simply in terms of "truth" and "falsehood". In fact, a few simple examples can show us that even when we've captured wholly the semantics of a sentence (its truth and meaning), we still haven't settled how the sentence is *used* in a particular context. Consider the following example, where the same sentence (meaning the same thing throughout) is used in two different ways (in two different contexts).

1. My car is in a No Parking zone, and a police officer approaches.

I tell him: "My car has a flat tyre".

2. I enter a tyre store, and tell the person at the counter: "My car has a flat tyre".

Now, the sentence is equally *true* in both cases; and, indeed, all the words in the sentence (and so the whole sentence itself) *means* the same thing in both cases. So in terms of *semantics* – meaning and truth – the sentence is the same in both cases. Still, I'm *using* the sentence to do different things in the two situations – to excuse myself in the first context, to request help in the second. The feature of use, above and beyond the semantic issues of truth and meaning, is the sort of thing pragmatics is concerned with; and we see that, even when the semantic dust has settled, there are still pragmatic issues to be dealt with.

As we have mentioned earlier in this Unit (Section 4.3.1. **Brief History**), in its Working Document, the International Pragmatic Association proposed to consider Pragmatics as a theory of linguistic adaptation and look into language use from all directions. In other words, Pragmatics has been considered to be a study of language aimed at filling up gaps in adequately describing a language scientifically which arise out of certain psychological, socio-cultural and even anthropological realities unique to concerned speech communities. Though there will still be areas of ambiguity so far as the linguistic behaviour is concerned, Pragmatics, certainly reduces the bulk of the unknown.

### Check your progress 2

1. Formulate a brief definition of Pragmatics.
2. What is pragmatic competence? What are its basic components?
3. What is the difference between Semantics and Pragmatics? Why do we need to study Pragmatics as an independent discipline?

### 12.3.3 Aspects of Pragmatics

Now what Pragmatics includes is a question worth serious contemplation, particularly because there is no consensus among linguists about the common aspects of the studies of Pragmatics. But there are certain concepts which a learner must be acquainted with if s/he desires to study the subject. Here in this section we are going to discuss in detail some of the important concepts of

pragmatics. Such terms in the following list and their explanations would enable you to engage in pragmatic analyses of linguistic utterances.

- Speech act theory
- Felicity conditions
- Conversational implicature
- The cooperative principle
- Conversational maxims
- Relevance
- Politeness
- Phatic tokens
- Reference
- Deixis.

The list of topics discussed here is definitely not all-inclusive. However, they should be enough to support you through the first stepping stones to your study of pragmatics.

#### 12.3.4.1 Speech Act Theory

Speech act theory is not the whole of Pragmatics, but is perhaps currently the most important established part of the subject. Contemporary debate in Pragmatics often focuses on its relations with Semantics. Since Semantics is the study of meaning in language, why add a new field of study to look at meaning from a novel viewpoint?

This is an elementary confusion. Clearly, linguists could develop a model of Semantics that included Pragmatics. Or, they could produce a model for each, which allows for some exploration and explanation of the boundary between them – but distinguishes them as in some way different kinds of activity. However, there is a consensus view that Pragmatics as a separate study is necessary because it explains meanings of the speech performances that Semantics overlooks.

Performative, as the term implies, is that by each utterance a speaker not only says something but also does certain things: giving information, stating a fact or hinting an attitude. The study of performatives led to the hypothesis of Speech Act Theory. As we said earlier we use language all the time to make things happen. We ask someone to *pass the salt* or *marry us*. We order a pizza or make a dental appointment. Speech acts include asking for a cup of tea, promising to drink the tea, discussing the importance of drinking tea in our daily life, ordering someone else to drink some tea, and so on and so forth. Some special people can do extraordinary things with words, like issuing an order, declaring war, awarding a penalty kick to Mohunbagan Club in National League or sentencing a convict to death.

Linguists have called these things "speech acts"-and developed a theory (called, "**speech act theory**") to explain how they work. Some of this is rooted in common sense and stating the obvious – as with **felicity conditions**. These explain that merely saying the words does not accomplish the act. Judges (unless they are also referees) cannot award penalty kicks to Mohunbagan, and football referees (unless they are also heads of state) cannot declare war.

Speech act theory broadly explains these utterances as having three parts or aspects: **locutionary**, **perlocutionary** and **illocutionary** acts.

**Locutionary** acts are simply the speech acts that have already taken place. According to J.L. Austin (1962), who began a systematic study of the speech acts, Locutionary acts are "the utterance of certain noises ... certain words in a certain construction, and the utterance of them with a certain sense and a certain reference." Lyons embarks upon his theory from this point by stratifying the few following "acts"

- (a) Produce an utterance or inscription
- (b) Compose a sentence
- (c) Contextualize.

**Perlocutionary** acts are acts performed using language as a tool. They are the effects of the utterance on the listener, who accepts the bet or pledge of marriage, is welcomed or warned or just convince or persuade someone to do something. The elements that define the act are external to the locutionary act.

**Illocutionary** acts are speech performances which are internal to locutionary acts. For instance, if some promises another by saying "I promise to buy you an ice-cream"; the speaker actually performs an act of promising by simply saying those words. They are the real actions which are performed by the utterance, where saying equals doing, as in betting, plighting one's troth, welcoming and warning.

There are two types of illocutionary forces: (a) implicit and b) explicit illocutionary forces. In the latter case there is an explicit and unambiguous linguistic signal to show the illocutionary encoding. In this case there are two types to be distinguished – (a) lexical and (b) grammatical. The following examples illustrate the lexical type:

1. I promise to buy you an ice-cream.
2. I warn you I shall leave in five minutes.
3. I beg you not to leave so early.
4. I really thank you for staying back.

The verbs like *promise*, *warn*, *beg*, *thank* are performative verbs; they act especially to encode illocutionary force. The grammatical type, on the other hand, encodes illocutionary force through grammatical structures of the utterance.



For example:

1. You wrote the article.
2. Did you write the article?
3. Write the article!

In the above sentences the illocutionary forces are encoded by the grammatical forms (i.e. affirmative/declarative, interrogative and imperative forms).

After going through the above portion you might think (and quite rightly of course) that illocutionary force is always explicit. Keeping the fact that each utterance encodes some indication of illocutionary force in mind one is right to an extent in thinking so. But it is also true that the illocutionary force is not always signalled linguistically. Such cases are known as implicit illocutionary forces. Alan Cruse (2004) identifies two ways in which the effective force of an utterance may diverge from explicitly expressed force. Firstly, it may differ in specificity. For example, a number of more specific speech acts such as promise, threat, warning, and thanking share the underlying feature of an assertion. A declarative sentence encodes the force of statement while it may act as a promise (as in the case of "I'll come back to you") or as a warning (as in "Leave now"). Secondly, the effective force of an utterance may be at variance from the explicit force and it is found to perform a different illocutionary act. For instance, the sentence "You shall leave *now*" is a declarative sentence syntactically but it functions as a command.

Some linguists have attempted to classify illocutionary acts into a number of categories or types. David Crystal, quoting J.R. Searle, gives five such categories: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declaratives.

- **Representatives/Assertives** : Here the speaker asserts a proposition to be true, using such verbs as : affirm, believe, conclude, deny, report, state, suggest, boast etc.
- **Directives** : Here the speaker tries to make the hearer do something, with such words as: ask, beg, challenge, command, dare, invite, insist, request.
- **Commissives** : Here the speaker commits himself (or herself) to a (future) course of action, with verbs such as: guarantee, pledge, promise, swear, vow, undertake, warrant.
- **Expressives** : The speaker expresses an attitude to or about a state of affairs, using such verbs as: apologize, appreciate, congratulate, deplore, detest, regret, thank, welcome.
- **Declaratives** : The speaker alters the external status or condition of an object or situation, solely by making the utterance: I now pronounce you man and wife, I sentence you to be hanged by the neck until you be dead,



I name this baby ... . The following are declarative verbs:

resign, dismiss, divorce (in Islam), christen, name, inaugurate (an exhibition or a showroom or a conference), excommunicate, sentence (in legal procedure), consecrate, bid (in auction), declare (at cricket) etc.

### **Check your progress 3**

1. What do you understand by speech act?
2. What is the speech act theory? What are its basic aspects?
3. Thinking of locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts (and their components), consider what (a) a parrot and (b) a computer could reasonably be expected to be able to do.
4. How does Searle categorize illocutionary acts?
5. What are performative verbs? Cite a few examples.
6. What do you understand by explicit illocutionary forces? How are they manifested?

### **12.3.4.2 Felicity Conditions**

The Felicity Conditions are indispensable to the success of a speech act. Owing its origin to a Latin root – “felix” or “happy” they are conditions needed for success or achievement of a performative. For instance, only certain people are authorized to declare war, baptize people or sentence convicted offenders. In some cases, the speaker must be sincere (as in apologizing or vowing) and external circumstances must be suitable. “Can you give me a lift?” requires that the hearer must have a vehicle, is either able to drive it somewhere or has a driver to do so, and that the speaker has a reason for the request. It may be that the utterance is meant as a joke or sarcasm, in which case a different interpretation of the utterance is in order. Roughly speaking, felicity conditions are of three kinds: **preparatory conditions, conditions for execution and sincerity conditions.**

#### **Preparatory conditions**

Preparatory conditions include the status or authority of the speaker to perform the speech act, the situation of other parties and so on.

So, in order to confirm a candidate's admission to a college, the speaker must be the Principal of the college concerned; a teacher as a member of the admission committee can help a student getting his/her admission to the college but cannot ensure the admission. In India only the President can dissolve Parliament, a qualified referee can caution a player, if he or she is officiating in a match. The referee's assistant (who, in the higher leagues, is also a qualified referee) cannot do this.

#### **Conditions for execution**

Conditions for execution can assume an exaggerated importance. We are so used to a ritual or ceremonial action accompanying the speech act that we

believe the act is invalidated if the action is lacking – but there are few real examples of this.

Take refereeing of association football. When a referee cautions a player, he (or she) should take the player's name, number and note the team for which he plays. The referee may also display a yellow card, but this is not necessary to the giving of the caution:

"The mandatory use of the cards is merely a simple aid for better communication."

In knighting their subjects, English monarchs traditionally touch the recipient of the honour on both shoulders with the flat side of a sword blade. But this, too, is not necessary to the performance of the speech act. A story is told in Oxford of a young man taking his final exams, who demanded a pint of beer from the invigilators. He pointed out that he was wearing his sword, as required by the mediaeval statute that made provision for the drink. The invigilator (exam supervisor), believing the young man's version of events, brought the beer, but checked the statutes. Later, the young man received a fine – he had not, as the statute also required, been wearing his spurs. The story may well be an urban myth, but illustrates neatly a condition of execution.

### **Sincerity conditions**

Sincerity conditions lay bare that the speaker must really intend what he or she says. In the case of apologizing or promising, it may be impossible for others to know how sincere the speaker is. Moreover, sincerity, as a genuine intention is no assurance that the apologetic attitude will last, or that the promise will be kept. There are some speech acts – such as taking an oath – where this sincerity is determined by the presence of witnesses. The one making the promise will not be able later to argue that he or she didn't really mean it. But in some cases where vowing or taking an oath is customary or has to be taken as a ritual, as in the case of doctors, policemen, lawyers, parliamentarians, ministers and the like, the sincerity conditions are reduced to mere verbal behaviour.

### **Check your progress 4**

1. Define felicity conditions. Why are they called so?
2. State briefly the different kinds of felicity conditions.
3. What are the felicity conditions for the following utterances to function?
  - a. I pronounce that they be Man and Wife.
  - b. I name this ship *Aurora*.
  - c. You are under arrest.
  - d. I absolve you from all your sins.
  - e. I declare the said person duly elected to the Parliament.

### 12.3.4.3 Conversational Implicature

Conversational implicature is a term used for the first time by the English language philosopher H. Paul Grice in the series of lectures he delivered at Harvard University in 1967. He outlined under the term how hearers manage to deduce the complete message when speakers mean more than they say. In other words, conversational implicature in Grice's formulation stand in general in opposition to "what is said," as a component of a more inclusive "what is meant or implied." An example of what Grice meant by conversational implicature is the utterance: "Have you got any cash on you?" where the speaker really wants the hearer to understand the meaning. "Can you lend me some money? I am in need of some."

Conversational Implicature refers to an indirect or implicit meaning of an utterance derived from context that is not present in its conventional use. In other words, it is a message that is not found in the plain sense of the sentence. The speaker implies it. The hearer is able to infer (work out by reading between the lines) this message in the utterance, by appealing to the rules governing successful conversational interaction. Grice proposed that implicatures like the second sentence can be calculated from the first, by understanding three things:

1. The usual linguistic meaning of what is said.
2. Contextual information (shared or general knowledge).
3. The cooperative principle or the assumption that the speaker is obeying during the speech act.

#### How implicatures arise

According to Grice there are two main mechanisms through which implicatures arise. Firstly, the mechanism that gives rise to standard implicatures with an assumption that the speaker is doing his/her best to follow the cooperative principle. Secondly, the mechanism that involves a deliberate contravention of the maxims.

Often during a speech act a single maxim suffices to exemplify an implicature. Here this point could be explained if we cite an example of the maxim of relation. Grice himself cites the following example:

A: (standard motorist) I've run out of petrol.

B: (passer-by) There's a garage just round the corner.

Taking for granted that the speaker is obeying the maxim of relation we can thus interpret the speech act as follows. Here B's reply to A's utterance implicates that there is a garage in the nearby locality which sells petrol and is open to the best of B's knowledge. If neither of these implications is true in this context the utterance loses relevance and therefore hampers successful communication.

## Check your progress 5

1. Define after Grice the conversational implicature.
2. What are the three things that Grice points out to facilitate successful conversational interaction by way of identifying implicature in an utterance?

### 12.3.4.4 The Cooperative Principle

The success of a conversation depends upon the speaker's approach to the interaction. The way in which people try to make conversations work is sometimes called the **cooperative principle**. We can recognize it partly by noting those people who are exceptions to the rule, and are not competent of making the conversation work. We may also, sometimes, find it useful consciously to contravene or disregard it, for example, when we receive an unwelcome call from a telephone salesperson, or where we are being interviewed by a police officer on suspicion of some terrible crime.

### 12.3.4.5 Conversational Maxims

According to Paul Grice speakers and hearers share a cooperative principle in ordinary conversation. Speakers create their utterances to be successfully perceived by the listeners. The principle can be explained by four underlying rules or maxims which David Crystal terms as **Conversational Maxims**. They are also sometimes named Grice's or Gricean maxims.

They are the maxims of quality, quantity, relevance and manner.

**Quality** : Speakers should be truthful. They should not say what they think is false, or make statements for which they have no evidence.

**Quantity** : A contribution should be as informative as is required for the conversation to proceed. It should be neither too little, nor too much. (It is not clear how one can decide what quantity of information satisfies the maxim in a given case.)

**Relevance** : Speaker's contributions should relate clearly to the purpose of the exchange. In other words, the speaker must be relevant (i.e. say things related to the current topic of the conversation).

**Manner** : Speaker's contributions should be perspicuous; clear, orderly and brief avoiding obscurity and ambiguity.

Gricean maxims are not prescribed to be used artificially to construct conversations. Rather, they are useful for analysing and interpreting conversation, and may reveal purposes of which, either as speaker or as listener, we are often not aware. Very habitually, we communicate particular non-literal meanings by appearing to "violate" or "flout" these maxims. For example, if you hear someone to be described to have "one good eye", you might as well assume the person's other eye was defective, even though nothing had been said about it at all.



## Check your progress 6

1. What are the conversational maxims?
2. How do they facilitate communication?

### 12.3.4.6 Relevance

Some linguists single out **relevance** as of greater importance than Grice recognized. Assuming that the cooperative principle is at work in most conversations, we can see how hearers will try to find meaning in utterances that seem meaningless or irrelevant. We assume that there must be a reason for these. Jackson and Stockwell cite a conversation between a shopkeeper and a 16-year old customer:

Customer : Just these, please.

Shopkeeper : Are you eighteen?

Customer : Oh, I'm from Middlesbrough.

Shopkeeper : (after a brief pause) OK (serves beer to him).

Jackson and Stockwell suggest that "there is no explanation for [the customer's] bizarre reply". Perhaps this should be qualified: we cannot be sure what the explanation is, but we can find some plausible answer. Possible explanations might include these:

1. The young man thought his being from Middlesbrough might explain whatever it was about him that had made the shopkeeper suspicious about his youth.
2. The young man thought the shopkeeper's question was provoked by his unfamiliar manner of speaking, so he wanted to explain this.
3. The young man was genuinely flustered and said the first thing he could think of while trying to think of a better reason for his looking under-age.
4. The young man thought that the shopkeeper might treat someone from Middlesbrough in a more indulgent manner than people from elsewhere.

Jackson and Stockwell suggest further that the shopkeeper "derived some inference or other" from the teenager's reply, since she served him the beer. It might of course be that she had raised the question (how old is this customer?) once, but when he appeared to have misunderstood it, was not ready to ask it again or clarify it, perhaps because this seemed too much like hard work, and as a stranger, the teenager would be unlikely to attract attention (from the police or trading standards officers) as a regular under-age purchaser of beer.

In analysing utterances and searching for relevance we can use a hierarchy of propositions, those that might be asserted, presupposed, entailed or inferred from any utterance.

- **Assertion** : What is asserted is the obvious, plain or surface meaning of the utterance (though many utterances are not assertions of anything).



- **Presupposition** : What is taken for granted in the utterance. "I saw the Mona Lisa in the Louvre" presupposes that the Mona Lisa is in the Louvre.
- **Entailments** : Logical or necessary corollaries of an utterance, thus the above example entails:  
 I saw something in the Louvre.  
 I saw something somewhere.  
 Something was seen.  
 There is a Louvre.  
 There is a Mona Lisa, and so on.
- **Inferences** : These are interpretations that other people draw from the utterance, for which we cannot always directly account. From this example, someone might infer rationally, that the Mona Lisa is, or was recently, on show to the public. They might infer, less rationally, that the speaker has been to France recently – because if the statement were about something from years ago, he or she would have said so.

### **The Given/New Distinction**

In conveying a message, we should think about more than just "who did what to whom." We also have to keep in mind what our listeners know already, and how to present the message in an intelligible and coherent manner.

We should not assume that our listeners have any particular knowledge. Even if we are sure they do have knowledge of something about which we wish to speak, we may need to introduce it, or recall what they already know. Our listeners may do this for us, as when one's parent, irked by a personal pronoun demands to know: "Who's she? The cat's mother?"

Similarly, we should not introduce familiar things as if they were new. This may seem patronizing, but can also be confusing, since our listeners may try to find a new interpretation to match our implication of novelty.

One way in which we show that information is new is by using nouns. Once it is familiar we refer (back) to it by using deictic pronouns – like "this" or "it".

### **Names and Addresses**

#### **T and V pronouns**

Some languages have different forms for "you" (French "tu/vous", German "du/Sie", Bangla Tui/Tumi/Apni, and Hindi Tu/Tum/Aap, for example). These may originally have indicated number ("vous" and "Sie") used for plural forms, but now show different levels of formality, with "tu" and "du" being more familiar, "vous" and "Sie" more polite. In English this was shown historically by the contrast between "you" and "thou/thee". The "thou" form survives in some dialects, while other familiar pronoun forms are "youse" (Liverpool) and "you-all" (southern

USA). Where it is possible to make the distinction, this is known as a T/V system of address.

In this system the V form is a marker of politeness or deference. It may also be a marker of status, with the V form used to superiors, the T form to equals or inferiors. T forms are also used to express solidarity or intimacy. The T form is found in Shakespeare's plays, where it almost always shows the speaker's attitude to status and situation. A king is "your majesty" or "you" but a peasant is "thou". It may be an insult, as when Tybalt addresses Romeo as "thou" ("Romeo, thou art a villain"; Romeo and Juliet, Act 3, Scene 3). It is also found in petrified or "frozen" language forms, such as the stylized speech of the Society of Friends ("Quakers") or other non-conformist groups. Oddly, many modern speakers think that "thou" (being "old") is more formal or courteous than "you" – when the reverse is the case!

### **Titles and Names**

In English, we also express status and attitude through titles, first names and last names. Titles are such things as Professor, Dr, Sir, Dame, Fr (Father). Mr, Mrs, Miss, Rabbi, Sr. (Sister) and, in the USA, even such things as coach and chef. Note that we abbreviate some of these in writing, but not in speaking – we write "Mr" but say "mister". First names may be given names (Fred, Susan) but include epithets such as chief, mate, man, pal. Last names are usually family names. In general, use of these on their own suggests lack of deference ("Oi, Smith ...") but in some contexts (public schools, the armed forces) they are norms. If one speaker uses title and last name (TLN), and the other first name (FN) only, we infer difference in status. The social superior (the FN speaker) may invite the inferior to use FN in response:

A : Professor Sen? B : Please call me Sanghita.

A : Lord Archer? B : Please, it's Jeffrey.

In schools, teachers use FN (or FNLN when rebuking or being sarcastic) in speaking to pupils and receive T ("Sir/Ma'am") or TLN ("Miss Chakraborty") in reply. "Miss" is a standard address for women teachers in school, even where the speaker knows them to be married.

In English, avoidance of address is often acceptable – thus where French speakers say "Bonsoir, Monsieur", English speakers may say merely, "Good evening" (Omitting the address in France would seem impolite).

### **Check your progress 7**

1. How relevant is **relevance** in Pragmatics?
2. How the hierarchy of propositions is important in this case?
3. Are these factors culture specific and therefore language specific? Try to seek your answer with reference to your own language.

#### 12.3.4.7 Politeness

The politeness principle is a series of maxims, which Geoffrey Leech has proposed as a way of explaining how politeness operates in conversational exchanges. Leech defines politeness as forms of behaviour that establish and maintain comity. That is the ability of participants in a social get together to engage in interaction in an atmosphere of relative harmony. In stating his maxims Leech uses his own terms for two kinds of illocutionary acts. He calls representatives "assertives", and calls directives "impositives".

Each maxim is accompanied by a sub-maxim (between square brackets), which is of less importance. These support the idea that negative politeness (avoidance of discord) is more important than positive politeness (seeking concord).

Not all of the maxims are equally important. For instance, tact influences what we say more powerfully than does generosity, while approbation is more important than modesty.

Note also that speakers may adhere to more than one maxim of politeness at the same time. Often one maxim is on the forefront of the utterance, with a second maxim being invoked by implication.

If politeness is not communicated, we can assume that the politeness attitude is absent.

#### Leech's maxims

- **Tact maxim** (in directives [impositives] and commissives): minimize cost to other; [maximize benefit to other]
- **Generosity maxim** (in directives and commissives): minimize benefit to self; [maximize cost to self]
- **Approbation maxim** (in expressives and representatives [assertives]): minimize dispraise of other; [maximize praise of other]
- **Modesty maxim** (in expressives and representatives): minimize praise of self; [maximize dispraise of self]
- **Agreement maxim** (in representatives): minimize disagreement between self and other; [maximize agreement between self and other]
- **Sympathy maxim** (in representatives): minimize antipathy between self and other; [maximize sympathy between self and other]

#### Face and politeness strategies

"Face" (as in "lose face") refers to a speaker's sense of linguistic and social identity. Any speech act may impose on this sense, and is therefore face threatening. And speakers have strategies for lessening the threat. Positive politeness means being complimentary and gracious to the addressee (but if this is overdone, the speaker may alienate the other party). Negative politeness is found in ways of mitigating the imposition:

|                             |                                                                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Hedging</b>              | : Er, could you, er, perhaps, close the, um, window?                 |
| <b>Pessimism</b>            | : I don't suppose you could close the window, could you?             |
| <b>Indicating deference</b> | : Excuse me, Sir, would you mind if I asked you to close the window? |
| <b>Apologizing</b>          | : I'm terribly sorry to put you out, but could you close the window? |
| <b>Impersonalizing</b>      | : The management requires all windows to be closed.                  |

Brown and Levinson sum up human politeness behaviour in four strategies, which correspond to these examples: bald on-record, negative politeness, positive politeness, and off-record-indirect strategy.

- The **bald on-record strategy** does nothing to minimise threats to the hearer's "face", for example,

**An emergency** : *Help!*

**Task oriented** : *Give me those!*

**Request** : *Put your jacket away.*

**Alerting** : *Turn your lights on!* (while driving)

- The **positive politeness strategy** shows you recognize that your hearer has a desire to be respected. It also confirms that the relationship is friendly and expresses group reciprocity. For example:

☐ **Attend to the hearer** : You must be hungry, it's a long time since breakfast. How about some lunch?

☐ **Avoid disagreement** : A: What is she, small? B: Yes, yes, she's small, smallish, um, not really small but certainly not very big.

☐ **Assume agreement** : So when are you coming to see us?

☐ **Hedge opinion** : You really should sort of try harder.

- The **negative politeness strategy** also recognizes the hearers' face. But it also recognizes that you are in some way imposing on them. Some other examples, would be to say, "I don't want to bother you but ..." or "I was wondering if ..."

For example:

☐ **Be indirect** : I am looking for a pen.

☐ **Request forgiveness** : You must forgive me but ...

☐ **Minimize imposition** : I just want to ask you if I could use your computer?



- **Pluralize the person responsible** : We forgot to tell you that you needed to buy your plane ticket by yesterday.
- **Off-record indirect strategies** take some of the pressure off of you. You are trying to avoid the direct FPS (Face and Politeness Strategies) of asking for a beer. Instead, you would rather it be offered to you once your hearer sees that you want one. For example:
  - **Give hints** : It's a bit cold in here.
  - **Be vague** : Perhaps someone should have been more responsible.
  - **Be sarcastic, or joking** : Yeah, he's a real Einstein (rocket scientist, Stephen Hawking, genius and so on)!

These strategies are not universal – they are used more or less frequently in other cultures. For example, in some eastern societies the off-record-indirect strategy will place on your hearer a social obligation to give you anything you admire. So speakers learn not to express admiration for expensive and valuable things in homes that they visit. Here is an anecdote to give an example how in a culture-specific way even simple compliment can cause complication in communication process to such an extent that the listener has to deliver an altogether unexpected verbal response.

A European friend visits the house of a Hyderabadi aristocrat. The conversation goes as follows:

- The European : It's a lovely house!
- Hyderabadi aristocrat : Ji, Aap hi ka hai (Sir, it's yours).
- Eu (looking at the wall) : Beautiful paintings!
- Hyderabadi aristocrat : Ji Aap hi ka hai (Sir, they're yours).
- Eu (meeting his children) : Cute and charming children!
- Hyderabadi aristocrat : Ji bahut sukriya (Thank you very much, Sir).

### **Check your progress 8**

1. What is politeness principle?
2. Prepare a list of politeness maxims after Geoffrey Leech.
3. How do these politeness maxims vary across cultures? Give examples from your language to elucidate your answer.
4. What are the politeness strategies? Briefly state.

### **12.3.4.8 Phatic Tokens**

These are ways of showing status by orienting comments to oneself, to the



other, or to the general or prevailing situation (In England this is usually the weather).

- **Self-oriented** phatic tokens are personal to the speaker: "I'm not up to this" or "My feet are killing me".
- **Other-oriented** tokens are related to the hearer: "Do you work here?" or "You seem to know what you're doing."
- A **neutral** token refers to the context or general state of affairs: "Cold, isn't it?" or "Lovely flowers".

A superior shows consideration in an **other-oriented** token, as when the Queen says to the factory worker: "It must be jolly hard to make one of those". The inferior might respond with a self-oriented token, like "Hard work, this". On the surface, there is an exchange of information. In reality, there is a suggestion and acceptance of a hierarchy of status. The factory worker would be unlikely to respond with, "Yes, but it's not half as hard as travelling the world, trooping the colour, making a speech at Christmas and dissolving Parliament".

#### Check your progress 9

1. What are the phatic tokens?
2. Why are they called so?
3. Are they frozen expressions of a language?

#### 12.3.4.9 Reference

According to Searle (1969) *reference* is not an inherent property of expressions, but a speech act. As Alan Cruse (2004) observes in his *Meaning in Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics* that often one considers *reference* in terms of linguistic expressions. In other words, the meaning of an utterance has been applied to some specific occasion to refer to. For example, in the newspaper headline *George Bush to Visit Ireland in May*, George Bush refers to the then President of U.S.A. and not an ordinary person with that name.

There are various types and modes of *reference*: here we would concentrate upon three most significant according to Cruse:

#### References

- i. definite reference
  - ii. indefinite reference
  - iii. generic reference.
1. **Definite reference**

Before getting into any discussion of **definite reference** we would have a look at the following two sentences:

(1) **The** man gave it to her.

(2) **A** man gave it to her.

Now in the above two sentences we have to find out how these two sentences differ so far as their meaning is concerned. We can explain it in the following way. Both the sentences point to an act of "giving" something: the act was performed by some adult male person and the object of that action was a woman. The attributes that make a distinction between these two sentences are:

- (a) The anticipated referential target is essentially a definite person (believed by the speaker to fall into the category of MAN) who might as well be identified with the speaker himself. Thus we may say

Referential target = + male

± Definite

(in these two sentences only).

- (b) The speaker wishes that there should be no ambiguity relating to the referential target also for the listener.
- (c) The act of reference conveys to the listener an implied guarantee of holding adequate information to uniquely identify the referent, considering the semantic content of the referring expression, and information obtainable from context, be it situational or linguistic or mental like memory and knowledge.
- (d) Normal input and output conditions hold.
- (e) The act of reference is embedded in a more inclusive speech act. An act of reference cannot stand on its own as a communication: *The man* communicates nothing in isolation but when placed in the sentence – *The man gave it to her*, or as a reply to the question – *Whom did you see?* – it makes sense.

Generally speaking, the identification of the referents of specific referring expressions is necessary for the listener/addressee first to decode and then to reconstruct the suggestion/meaning intended by the speaker. Therefore, we may say that the term *definite reference* demarcates explicitly the identification of the referent to be highly relevant to the message.

## 2. Indefinite reference

Sentence 2) above is an instance of *indefinite reference*. By the term *indefinite reference* we understand that the identity of the referent is not pertinent to the message, i.e. the identity is not crucial for the message to be successfully communicated. What is essential in this case is the class that the referent belongs to. Here are a few examples. Think about a situation when someone is entirely bored and in response someone else,

a friend may be, picks up a book and offers it to him/her accompanied with an utterance either a) *Here, read a book*, or b) *Here, read this book*. Can you notice any difference in these two sentences? How are these two different? Well, in both cases the identity of the book may be known to both the addressee and the addresser as it is a face-to-face situation. The most important point of difference is that the identity of the book is not crucial for the first sentence whereas for the second the identity of the book is presented to be vital for the message.

Here the indefiniteness is determined by the use of an indefinite article. There could be indefinite reference even without it. Let's have a look at the following expressions:

- (3) Come up and see me sometime.
- (4) I think he's hiding somewhere.
- (5) I'll handle somehow.
- (6) Are you looking for someone?
- (7) She met this sailor.
- (8) Some boys took it from him.
- (9) To make the spell work, you have to say certain words.

Now compare sentence (9) with the following sentence:

- (10) To get the automatic door to open you have to say a word.

Sentence (10) may have two intents: (a) it could mean that any word uttered could open the automatic door, or (b) a specific word acting as a password is necessary for the door to open. These exemplify (cited by Alan Cruse 2004) the classical specific/non-specific distinction in indefinites.

### 3. Generic reference

Generic reference refers to a **class** of referents. In other words under this reference a whole class is implied and a general statement is made about the class. For example —

Dog is a faithful animal.

A dog is a faithful animal.

Man is mortal.

A man is mortal.

The child is the father of the man.

The above mentioned utterances are instances of generic reference. Here in these sentences, as Cruse (2004) suggests, there are two sorts of intents involving generic reference as arguments: either something is predicted of the whole class referred to [i.e. all dogs are faithful, all men ( $\pm$  male)

are mortal, all children (+male) father all men], or something is predicted of each member of the class (i.e. not all dogs but some particular dog is faithful – they are in opposition unfaithful dogs, too). These two possible interpretations available under generic reference are called **collective** reading and **distributed** reading respectively.

### Check your progress 10

1. What do you understand by the term “reference”?
2. What are the different types of reference?
3. Who did propose the references to be a speech act and not an inherent property of an expression? Why did he say so? Do you agree with him? Why?

#### 12.3.4.10 Deixis

Deixis is a Greek word which means “pointing”, “indicating”. This term came to Pragmatics from philosophy. The philosophers prefer the word indexical expressions (or just indexicals). The first person to use this term was an American philosopher Charles Peirce.

Deixis, since then, has become an important field of language study in its own right – and very important for learners of second languages. But it has some relevance to analysis of conversation and Pragmatics. It is often best described as “verbal pointing”, that is to say pointing by means of language. The linguistic forms of this pointing are called deictic expressions, deictic markers or deictic words, they are also sometimes called indexicals.

Given the fact that it is a new concept for those who are just getting acquainted with concepts relating to language studies generally and Pragmatics in particular, first, let us begin with the pronunciation and etymology of the word. How do you pronounce the word “deixis”? The term comes from Greek *deiktikos* (= able to show). This is related to Greek *deiknymi* (dyke-nimmy) meaning “explain” or “prove”. The standard pronunciation has two syllables (dyke-sis or /daiksis/, according to British RP) while the adjective form is deictic (dyke-tik or /daiktik).

The term means ‘pointing to’ something. In verbal communication however, deixis in its narrow sense refers to the contextual meaning of pronouns, and in its broad sense, what the speaker means by a particular utterance in a given speech context. Deixis, to Alan Cruse (2004), has a very flexible countenance signifying different things to different people. He cites Bühler (1934) to state that any expression which cited a referent in space or time is a deictic expression. For example, the utterance, *The cat sat on the mat*, contains a deictic locative expression, i.e. *on the mat*. The sentence also has a tense marker which is generally considered to be deictic. Let us have a look at the following sentences:



A : It's mystery to me, how the conjurer sawed that woman in half.

B : Well, Jane was the woman he did it to. So presumably she must be Japanese.

### 1. Person Deixis

This primarily engages the person or the first person, the addressee or the second person and other major participants in the speech act or the third person. In English they come in singular and plural forms and are all casemarked. For example:

|               | Singular           | Plural    |
|---------------|--------------------|-----------|
| First person  | I/me               | we/us/our |
| Second person | you/your           | you       |
| Third person  | he/him, she/her/it | they/them |

### 2. Spatial Deixis

As the term indicates it deals with the location or the space in the speech act. In English it marks itself basically in the form of locative adverbs like "here" and "there," demonstratives/determiners as "this" and "that".

### 3. Temporal Deixis

Temporal deixis functions to trace points or intervals on time axis using the moment of utterance as a reference point. There are, however, three major distinctions in the time scale: (1) past or before the time of speech act, (2) present or the moment of actual speech act, and (3) future or after the time of speech act. The basic temporal deictics in English are "now" and "then". Temporal deictics depend a great deal on clock and calendar. For instance, in English we have lexical deictics only for 24 hrs period as *yesterday*, *today*, and *tomorrow*. Notice that these terms include both deictic information (past, present and future) and non-deictic information. For similar references to other period terms like *this*, *last*, *next* are used. These terms are used in order to give reference to calendrical information when proper names like January, February, March and Sunday, Monday, Wednesday etc. are not used. For example, *this month*, *last month*, *next month* and *last day*, *next day* etc. Some other examples of deictic expressions of time are: *now*, *then*, *yesterday*, *tomorrow*, *today*, *tonight*, *next week*, *last week*, *this week*, *ago*, *later*, *soon*, *before*.



#### 4. Social Deixis

Examples of social deixis can be best given in the use of TV pronouns in many languages. As we have already seen in the discussion under section 4.3.3.6 on **Relevance** and subsection **names and addresses** that in English this distinction often is linguistically either minimal or in most cases non-functional. In Standard Bangla, for instance, social hierarchy and the status of the addressee and addresser is signalled by TV pronouns like *apni*, *tumi* and *tui*. The basic factor here is the social stratum: in asymmetric use *tui* (*tu-form*) points downwards along the social scale with the speaker's position as reference point and *apni* (*vous-form*) points upwards while in symmetric use signals social equality.

#### 5. Discourse deixis

It involves the use of *this*, and *it* to point to future discourse element, viz. things that are going to be told as in "Listen to *this* and *it*'ll make you jump in joy!" Similarly, *that* is used to point to the past discourse elements as in the utterance "*That* was not a nice thing to say." In the same way, the element *hereby* of an explicitly performative utterance could be said just to point to the current discourse as in the sentence "It is *hereby* notified for all concerned that the college will remain closed for next two days." At times even words like *therefore* and *futhermore* can also function as discourse deixis as they could stand for "it follows from that" and "in addition to that" respectively. Some words which indicate this relation are: *but*, *therefore*, *in conclusion*, *to the contrary*, *still*, *however*, *anyway*, *well*, *besides*, *actually*, *all in all*, *so*, *after all*.

#### 6. Gestural and Symbolic Deixis

This is the category of deixis which makes sense when the addresser can clearly see the addressee. In other words such deictic terms make sense when supported by the gesture of the speaker in a speech act. The following examples could clarify the definition to you:

1. The supervisor instructing his/her labourer to organize the cartons in the stockroom — "Put one over the other one there in a row."
2. A patient pointing to the damaged tooth to a dentist — "This is the tooth that hurts, not that one."
3. An electrician to his assistant — "Press the buttom when I signal - now."
4. A magician on stage looking for volunteer participants — "I want three from the audience - you, you and you."

But in case of symbolic deixis such minute and immediate monitoring of

speech act is not necessary. The relevant parameters for deictic interpretation are established over a relatively long period of conversation/discourse. Here these sentences can exemplify this:

1. "Isn't the weather in Kolkata during winter wonderful?"
2. "I've lived in Cooch Behar for eight years."

### **Check your progress 11**

1. Trace the origin of the term deixis.
2. What is the meaning of the term?
3. Briefly discuss different types of deixis with examples from English and your own language.

### **12.3.4 Contrastive Pragmatics**

The pragmatic principles people abide by in one language are often different in another. Thus there has been a growing interest in how people in different languages observe a certain pragmatic principle. Cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies reported what is considered polite in one language is sometimes not polite in another.

Contrastive pragmatics, however, is not confined to the study of certain pragmatic principles. Cultural breakdowns, pragmatic failure, among other things, are also components of cross-cultural pragmatics. This very aspect of the study of pragmatics from the perspective of cultural studies can be of great help in a multi-cultural and multi-linguistic country like India where most people are at least bi-lingual if not multilingual. An active interest and intense research in comparative pragmatics can open up new vistas of possibilities even in translation studies.

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## **12.4 Pragmatics and Language Teaching**

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In the previous sections we have discussed how people decode an utterance and create meaning out of a conversation said in a particular circumstance. In other words, Pragmatics, generally speaking, is a set of skills as is linguistic competence. The meaning of an utterance is not an inherent property of the syntactic structure of the utterance in a particular language but arises out of entrenched conventions and cultural practices. It is this aspect of extralinguistic competence that makes someone identify some strings of utterances as coherent discourse and others as incoherent linguistic mess. This very fact makes the study of Pragmatics a crucial field of knowledge for the successful teaching and learning of foreign/second or other languages.

Cook (2001) identifies a two-fold importance of pragmatic theories in language learning/teaching. According to him the divergence of function and form clearly indicates that one cannot rely solely upon teaching only forms while the language teachers aim at teaching a language. In producing linguistic utterances a learner

is expected to choose the most suitable word to unmistakably realize his/her intention. Here at times functional accuracy is preferred over phonetic and syntactic accuracy. Secondly, the linking of forms to functions proves to be extremely helpful to the learners to orient themselves within a discourse. A serious problem that a learner of a foreign/second language faces is a disturbing sensation of missing a point even in spite of understanding every word literally. A lesson on Pragmatics while teaching a foreign/second/other language may be of great help to remove this discomfort. Such a study can help the learner to understand the structure of the discourse as a progression of functional units and that a breakdown in pragmatic interpretation may lead the learners to loose their ways.

Another focus of research in Pragmatics is learner language or interlanguage. This interest eventually evolved into Interlanguage Pragmatics, a branch of Pragmatics which specifically discusses how non-native speakers comprehend and produce a speech act in a target language and how their pragmatic competence develops over time (Kasper & Blum-Kulka 1993; Kasper 1997). To date, a handful of cross-sectional, longitudinal and theoretical studies on classroom basis have been conducted and the potentials along the interface of Pragmatics with SLA research have been widely recognized. Topics of immediate interest to which language teachers at large may contribute seem just numerous. What are some of the pragmatic universals underlying L2 acquisition? What influences L1 exerts on the learner's L2 acquisition? How shall we measure the learner's pragmatic performance with a native pragmatic norm? These are but a few of the interesting ones and for more intense discussions you may refer to Kasper & Schmidt (1996), Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford (1996), Takahashi (1996), House (1996) and Cohen (1997).

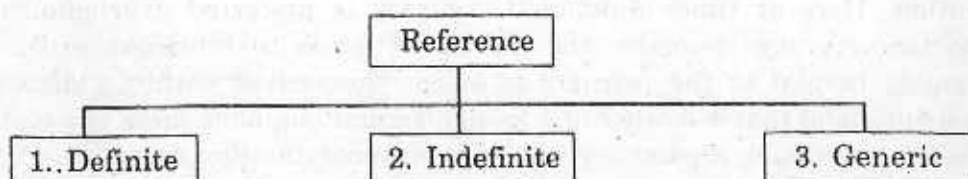
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## 12.5 Let us sum up

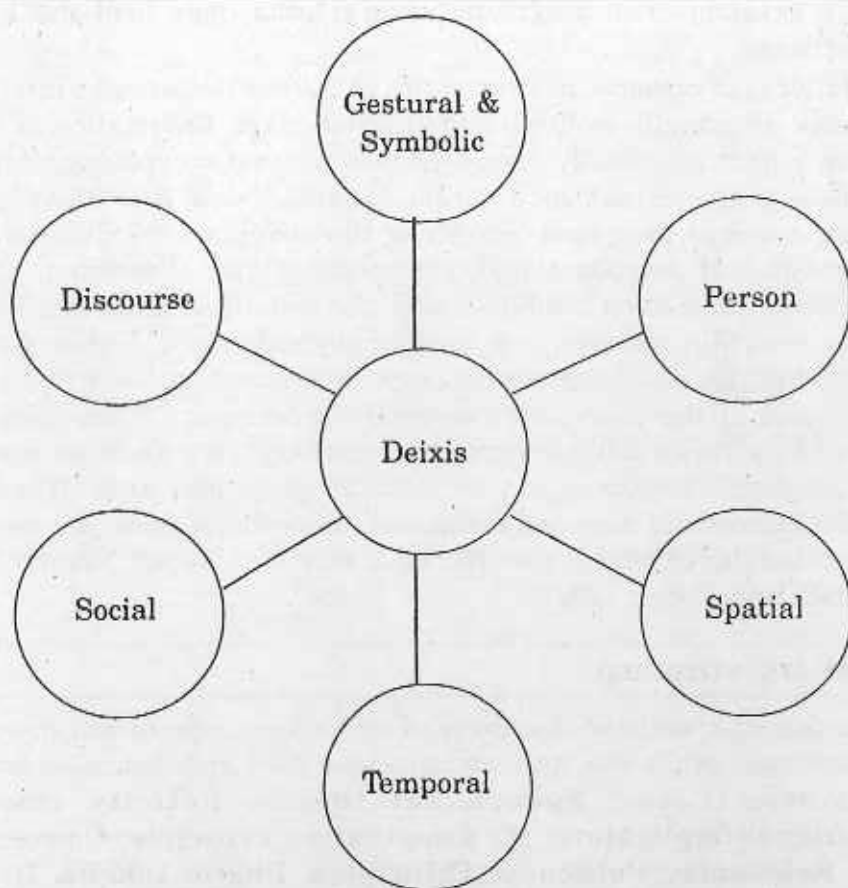
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Here in this unit we have discussed so far various aspects and the principles of pragmatic studies. In this unit we have identified and discussed with ample examples aspects like, **Speech act theory, Felicity conditions, Conversational implicature, the Cooperative Principle, Conversational maxims, Relevance, Politeness Principles, Phatic tokens, Reference, Deixis**. We have also discussed in detail **locutionary, perlocutionary and illocutionary forces**. A section on implication of pragmatic studies for language teaching is also included. The following diagrams give you a comprehensive picture of **reference and deixis**.

1.



2.



Here we have also discussed the theoretical developments contributed by eminent pragmaticians like Grice, Leech and the like on the formulations of whom the study of modern pragmatics lies. Here you have studied Leech's **maxims of politeness** and Grice's **Conversational maxims**. The former includes **Tact maxim, Generosity maxim, Approbation maxim, Modesty maxim, Agreement maxim, and Sympathy maxim** while the latter consists of **Maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relevance and Manner**.

## 12.6 Self-Study Exercises

Answer the following first and then check your answers with the ones given at the end of this unit. Give yourself a mark for each correct answer. See your score.

1. Pragmatics is the study of how meaning and syntax are related in a language.
  - A. True
  - B. False
2. This rule says that you must be relevant in the conversation.
  - A. Maxim of Quality
  - B. Grice's Maxim of Relation
  - C. Grice's Maxim of Quantity
3. Make your contribution as informative as is required.  
Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
  - A. Maxim of quality
  - B. Grice's Maxim of Relation
  - C. Grice's Maxim of Quantity
4. Do not say what you believe to be false.  
Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.
  - A. Maxim of Quality
  - B. Grice's Maxim of Relation
  - C. Grice's Maxim of Quantity
5. Background knowledge shared by the speaker and the hearer.
  - A. Physical context
  - B. Epistemic context
  - C. Linguistic context
  - D. Social context
6. The social relationship and setting of the speakers and the hearers.
  - A. Physical context
  - B. Epistemic context
  - C. Linguistic context
  - D. Social context



7. The utterance previous to the utterances under consideration.
- A. Physical context
  - B. Epistemic context
  - C. Linguistic context
  - D. Social context
8. Where the conversation takes place, what objects are present, and what actions are taking place.
- A. Physical context
  - B. Epistemic context
  - C. Linguistic context
  - D. Social context
9. Please take out the garbage
- A. Direct speech act
  - B. Indirect speech act
10. I don't know if John married Helen.
- A. Direct speech act
  - B. Indirect speech act
11. Did John marry Helen?
- A. Direct speech act
  - B. Indirect speech act
12. I would like to know if John married Helen.
- A. Direct speech act
  - B. Indirect speech act
13. I ask you whether John married Helen.
- A. Direct speech act
  - B. Indirect speech act
14. Do you know if John married Helen?
- A. Direct speech act
  - B. Indirect speech act
15. I request you to take out the garbage.
- A. Direct speech act
  - B. Indirect speech act

16. The garbage isn't out yet.

- A. Direct speech act
- B. Indirect speech act

17. Could you take out the garbage?

- A. Direct speech act
- B. Indirect speech act

18. Would you mind taking out the garbage?

- A. Direct speech act
- B. Indirect speech act

19. How many times do I have to tell you to clean the office?

- A. Direct speech act
- B. Indirect speech act

20. I would like for you to take out the garbage.

- A. Direct speech act
- B. Indirect speech act

**What is the structure and word order of the following sentences?**

21. How many times do I have to tell you to clean your room?

- A. Declarative
- B. Interrogative
- C. Imperative

22. Who is that man over there?

- A. Declarative
- B. Interrogative
- C. Imperative

23. Could you lift 200 pounds?

- A. Declarative
- B. Interrogative
- C. Imperative

**What type of speech act are the following sentences?**

24. How many times do I have to tell you to clean your room?

- A. Assertion
- B. Question
- C. Directive

25. Who is that man over there?

- A. Assertion
- B. Question
- C. Directive

26. Could you lift 200 pounds?

- A. Assertion
- B. Question
- C. Directive

**Classify the following sentences: sentence type, speech act, and direct or indirect (only choose three answers).**

27. That sure looks like a good candy bar. [Tom says to his friend George during lunch]

- A. Declarative
- B. Interrogative
- C. Imperative
- D. Assertion
- E. Question
- F. Directive
- G. Indirect
- H. Direct

28. The water is too cold in the swimming pool. [Friend says to friend in a public swimming pool]

- A. Declarative
- B. Interrogative
- C. Imperative
- D. Assertion
- E. Question
- F. Directive
- G. Indirect
- H. Direct

29. It is too cold in this house. [Husband says to wife].

- A. Declarative
- B. Interrogative

- C. Imperative
- D. Assertion
- E. Question
- F. Directive
- G. Indirect
- H. Direct

30. Jane says to her mother: "I wonder why Frank (her brother) didn't come home today."

- A. Declarative
- B. Interrogative
- C. Imperative
- D. Assertion
- E. Question
- F. Directive
- G. Indirect
- H. Direct

31. Can you pass the salt?

- A. Declarative
- B. Interrogative
- C. Imperative
- D. Assertion
- E. Question
- F. Directive
- G. Indirect
- H. Direct

32. I noticed that the car hasn't been washed yet. [Father says to son]

- A. Declarative
- B. Interrogative
- C. Imperative
- D. Assertion
- E. Question
- F. Directive

- G. Indirect
  - H. Direct
33. It sure is a beautiful day.
- A. Declarative
  - B. Interrogative
  - C. Imperative
  - D. Assertion
  - E. Question
  - F. Directive
  - G. Indirect
  - H. Direct

**Which maxim is violated, thus resulting in an implicature?**

34. Woman: Did you bring enough food for the party?  
 Man: I'd say that you made just the right amount – if a couple of hundred people show up.
- A. Maxim of Quality
  - B. Grice's Maxim of Relation
  - C. Grice's Maxim of Quantity
35. Sandy: Does Tom work right now?  
 Tom: Well, he goes to Riverside every weekend.
- A. Maxim of Quality
  - B. Grice's Maxim of Relation
  - C. Grice's Maxim of Quantity
36. Susar: Are you coming to the movies tonight?  
 Elizabeth: Do I look like I have any free time?
- A. Maxim of Quality
  - B. Grice's Maxim of Relation
  - C. Grice's Maxim of Quantity
37. Corey: Do you think Mary is pretty?  
 Jeff: Let's just say that I wouldn't vote for her in the local beauty contest.
- A. Maxim of Quality
  - B. Grice's Maxim of Relation
  - C. Grice's Maxim of Quantity



38. Laura: I don't believe any men are coming to visit today, Mother.  
 Amanda: What? Not one? You must be joking! Not one man? It can't be true!  
 There must be a flood! There must have been a tornado!
- Maxim of Quality
  - Grice's Maxim of Relation
  - Grice's Maxim of Quantity
39. John: How are you today?  
 Linda: Well, my car is not working too good right now and to tell you the truth, I don't have very much money. In fact, I don't know how I'm going to pay my bills this month.
- Maxim of Quality
  - Grice's Maxim of Relation
  - Grice's Maxim of Quantity
40. James: Do I look fat?  
 Leslie: Have you thought about working out or joining a health spa?
- Maxim of Quality
  - Grice's Maxim of Relation
  - Grice's Maxim of Quantity

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## 12.8 Answers to Self-Study Exercises

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1. (A), 2. (B), 3. (C), 4. (A), 5. (B), 6. (D), 7. (C), 8. (A), 9. (A), 10. (B), 11. (A), 12. (B), 13. (A), 14. (B), 15. (A), 16. (B), 17. (B), 18. (B), 19. (B), 20. (B), 21. (B), 22. (B), 23. (B), 24. (C), 25. (B), 26. (B), 27. (A, F, G), 28. (A, D, H), 29. (A, F, G), 30. (A, E, G), 31. (B, F, G), 32. (A, F, G), 33. (A, D, H), 34. (A), 35. (B), 36. (B), 37. (B), 38. (A), 39. (C), 40. (B).

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## Unit 13 □ Register

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### Structure

#### 13.0 Objectives

#### 13.1 Introduction

#### 13.2 Speech situations

#### 13.3 Linguistic features of register

#### 13.4 Three non-linguistic factors influencing register

#### A. Speaker and familiarity

##### (i) Forms of Address

##### (ii) Politeness morphology

##### (iii) Ellipsis

##### (iv) Contractions

##### (v) Code-switching

#### B. Setting and formality

##### (i) Vernacular and non-vernacular language

##### (ii) Hypercorrection and malapropism

#### C. Subject and function

##### (i) Jargon and slang

##### (ii) Speaking vs. Writing

##### (iii) Attention to speech

##### (iv) Linguistic characteristics of genres

#### 13.5 Let us sum up

#### 13.6 Comprehension Exercises

#### 13.7 Glossary

#### 13.8 Bibliography

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### 13.0 Objectives

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This unit helps you to study **register** that is the particular vocabulary choices made by an individual or a group to fulfill the variety of language functions that add up to communication. We shall discuss the various linguistic features of register as well as look at the factors influencing register.

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## 13.1 Introduction

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This unit deals with varieties of language which are normally held to fall under the heading of Language Register. Language varies according to different occupations. Registral varieties are generally characterized by variation in lexis, rather than by variation in grammar. The concept of Register is useful in the analysis of the communicative competence of any user of the language.

Let us begin our discussion with an example. To get someone's attention in English, each of the utterances

1. 'Hey!'
2. 'Excuse me!', and
3. 'Sir!' or 'Ma'am!'

is grammatical and fully meaningful contribution to the discourse of the moment, but only one of them may satisfy societal expectations and the speaker's preferred presentation of self. 'Hey!' addressed to one's mother or father, for example, often expresses either a bad attitude or surprising misunderstanding of the usually recognized social proprieties, and saying 'Sir!' to a 12-year-old probably expresses inappropriate deference.

Every language accommodates such differences as a non-discrete scale or continuum of recognizably different linguistic 'levels' or styles, termed Registers, and every socially mature speaker, as part of learning the language, has to learn to distinguish and choose among places on the scale of register.

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## 13.2 Speech situations

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Each occasion of speech, or speech situation, determines a different register, and each register favours certain choices among different utterances, each of which may fulfill the requirements of grammaticality and the cooperative principle. Notice in the following two speech situations how each of the three English sentences differently characterizes the speaker's understanding of the social situation and his or her place in it.

- a. Interrupting a passer-by to ask the time, one might say any of 1-3 :
  1. Hey. What time is it?
  2. Hi. Do you have the time?
  3. Excuse me. Could you tell me what time it is?
- b. As the greeting of a letter to a member of the city council :



4. Dear Betty,
5. Dear Ms. Jones,
6. Your Excellency.

Registers may range even more broadly, while the basic purpose and raw information of speech remain constant. Look at the various ways in English to express the desire/demand that sometimes may be appropriately ordered from very polite to very impolite. Readers will surely disagree with some of the rankings and might even broaden the scale of politeness with additional sentences.

- |             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Very polite | a. Perhaps I should be alone now.<br>b. May I be alone now?<br>c. I don't suppose you would leave, would you?<br>d. Would you be willing to leave?<br>e. I'd appreciate it if you would leave.<br>f. Please leave.<br>g. Don't you wanna leave?<br>h. Would you leave?<br>i. Get goin, how bout it? |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Very impolite j. Get outa here.

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### 13.3 Linguistic features of register

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As in these examples, mature speakers distinguish registers by an array of linguistic features, across the grammar, from phonology to lexicon and morphology to syntax. Some English examples are :

- a. Phonology : rate of speech, and contractions, as in I do not know vs. I dunno; Whatcha doin? vs. What are you doing?
- b. Lexical morphemes such as wish vs. demand ; yes vs. yeah ;
- c. Grammatical morphemes : I ain't vs. I'm not. Late Middle English had also the pronoun distinction of familiar thou/thee (second person singular, subject and object case) vs. polite ye/you, which were originally second person plural.

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### 13.4 Three non-linguistic factors influencing register

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Differences of register may be thought of as based upon three important non-linguistic factors :

- a. **speakers**, especially their relationship of familiarity with one another.
- b. **setting**, or the relative formality of the occasion, and
- c. **subject of discourse**, or the functions, or purposes, of speaking.

These three factors are ordinarily interdependent. We tend to talk to certain persons in certain settings about subjects, and we tend to be more familiar with people in less formal circumstances in which language fulfills certain functions rather than others. Altogether, our linguistic response to the three factors has been termed 'speech accommodation' (Giles 1984), and 'audience design' (Bell 1984).

### A. Speakers and familiarity

Certainly, speakers address one another differently, particularly according to how familiar they are with one another, and how much information and experience they share. Five characteristics of language which particularly depend on relationships, and perceived relationships, between a speaker and an audience are forms of address, politeness morphology, ellipsis, contractions, and code-switching.

(i) **Forms of address.** In probably all languages, speakers acknowledge politeness and familiarity by choice of forms of address: in English, for example, 'President Clinton'/'Mr. Clinton'/'William'/'Bill'/'Billy'. Choice of one or the other form of address communicates the speaker's acknowledgement of a social circumstance, including the speaker's place in it. This is not always a matter of use or non-use of titles and nicknames. In English, for example, a parent's use of a child's middle name tends to mean trouble for the child: 'John William, come here'; 'Mary Catherine, I saw that'.

(ii) **Politeness morphology.** Perhaps most languages – though not modern English except in archaic uses of *thou* and *thee*, and potential use of the 'royal we' by monarch – distinguish politeness by choice between grammatical morphemes, especially familiar and polite pronouns. This distinction is often made in second person pronouns, for those addressed (English *you*, *your*, *yours*), but may also be in third-person pronouns, for persons spoken about (English *he*, *she*, *it*, *they*, etc.). Spanish has:

|                        | Familiar        | Polite         |
|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| a. 2nd-person singular | <i>tu</i>       | <i>usted</i>   |
| b. 2nd person plural   | <i>vosotros</i> | <i>ustedes</i> |

*Tu* and *vosotros* are usually considered to be used for persons of similar age and social status as the speaker, though young people tend to use familiar pronouns for persons of the same age, regardless of social status.

Amharic is a language which has the familiar/polite distinction in singular

third-person pronouns : familiar *issu* 'he' and *isswa* 'she' vs. polite *issaccaw*. The polite form is particularly for older persons, but is favoured even for persons unfamiliar to speaker. In languages with such grammatical morphemes, there is grammaticization of politeness, since the choice between a familiar or polite pronoun concerns grammatical competence, in the choice of grammatical morphemes, as well as simultaneous sociolinguistic competence, in the expression of social expectations and presentation of self which this choice signifies.

Japanese has other forms of grammaticized politeness, including 'plain' versus polite forms of verbs. Plain forms, for example *miru* 'see' (vs. polite form *mimasu*), and *iku* 'go' (vs. polite form *ikimasu*), are used when speaking to close friends, and polite forms when speaking to others especially older persons and persons one doesn't know.

(iii) **Ellipsis.** Ellipsis is the omission of major constituents of sentences, as in *I did* (the object of the verb is unstated, vs. *I did what you said*) and *Can't go* (the subject is unstated, vs. *I can't go*). Persons familiar with one another share a lot of information, so in conversations between them much of this can go unsaid, and ellipsis contributes to fluency in their talk. The fluency and greater rate of speech are also evidence as well of register choice, signalling speakers' judgments of the degree of familiarity in their relationship to one another.

Knowledge of the possibilities of ellipsis is a matter of grammatical competence. English for example does not allow object ellipsis with some verbs : *I understand* is okay but not *I opened*. But the choice to employ ellipsis or not reflects sociolinguistic competence.

(iv) **Contractions.** Rate of speech increases with familiarity between speakers. As the result of grammaticization of fast-speech deletions of phones, many languages, including English, have customary short pronunciations and spellings of some frequent grammatical morphemes. In English these are the contractions of auxiliary verbs including *I'm* and *they're*, and of *not* as in *don't* and *isn't*. One study (Crystal and Derek 1969) showed the following average occurrence of possible contractions per thousand words in five British English settings:

|                                        |       |
|----------------------------------------|-------|
| Telephone conversation between friends | 59.9% |
| Interviews                             | 25.4  |
| Prepaid speeches                       | 13.3  |
| Science fiction                        | 6.5   |
| Academic writing                       | 0.1   |

Knowledge of contractions is an aspect of grammatical competence, but the choice to employ them or not reflects sociolinguistic competence.

(v) **Code-switching.** Switching from language to language within a single speech situation is called code-switching, a phenomenon which characterizes the sociolect of bilingual speech communities, the members of which have the grammatical competence to code-switch when speaking to one another. Some occasions of code-switching may be necessitated by speakers' lesser degree of grammatical competence in one of the languages. For example, one who has received a specialized education in a second language often finds it necessary to switch out of the native language when talking about that.

Although bilingual competence is perhaps never balanced for all subjects and settings, many occasions of code-switching are motivated as aspects of registration since they occur in contexts in which differential grammatical competence cannot be an explanation. These reveal this added dimension of bilinguals for expressing sociolinguistic competence. The following (from the *New York Times* March 26, 1997) exemplifies, if somewhat exaggeratedly, code-switching by Spanish/English bilinguals:

*Quieres que te cocine some rice en la hitachi*, or should I just get you some confley con leche? By the way, you embarked me el otro dia. What did you do, pick up some fafu en vez de ir al restaurante where I was waiting? Eres tan chipero.

(*Quieres que te cocine* 'do you want me to cook for you?' la Hitachi 'the (Hitachi) Steam Cooker', *confley con leche* 'cornflakes with milk', *el otro dia* 'the other day', *fafu en vez de ir al restaurante* 'fastfood instead of going to restaurant', *Eres tan chipero* 'You're so cheap')

Here, within an English sentence, Spanish *embarcar* is treated as an English verb, *embarked*, and within a Spanish sentence, English *cheap* is treated as Spanish noun *chipero*. *Confley* 'cornflakes' and *fafu* 'fast food' are English words adapted to requirements of Spanish phonology. The alternating stretches of fluent Spanish and English illustrate well the probable sociolinguistic-affective purpose of code-switching. One such bilingual said she 'often switches into Spanish to convey anger, joy, love or embarrassment because Spanish is a more descriptive, emotional language'. But a phrase like *en vez de ir al restaurant* 'instead of going to the restaurant' is not obviously more descriptive or objectively emotional than the equivalent English. The self-identity assert shared-identity with another Spanish speaker.

Code-switching can be even more affectively expressive in multilingual situations. In multilingual Kenya educated persons typically speak at least



three languages : their regional or home language, Swahili, and English. Swahili is the lingua franca of East Africa and the official national language of Kenya, and English is the language of secondary and higher education. Kenyans who share a regional language may switch to English to establish their status as educated persons, and government officials, even when speaking to fellow speakers of a regional language, may switch to Swahili to assert authority and their official status (Myers-Scotton 1993b).

### B. Setting and formality

We know special forms of language for use in particular settings are often distinguished by their degree of formality. 'Formality' in these cases largely means degree of fixedness of social relations between speakers, and this tends to correspond to the socially licensed amount of reciprocity of speech – whether talk tends to be one way or whether all those present talk more or less equivalently. In the court-room, for example, the judge has to be addressed in the proper way, even by an old friend, and only the judge speaks at will.

The most established and routinized settings tend also to determine regular or even ritualized, 'one-way', forms of language. For example, the classroom, sports events, and formal meetings have their preferred linguistic forms. 'The meeting will come to order' is the usual and ritualized way of saying, in meetings, 'Hey, let's get quiet and get to work now', and 'Bottom of the sixth, two out, three-one on Bonds' is the normal way of saying, in the game of baseball. It is the bottom of the six inning of play: there are two outs, and the count on Bonds in three balls and one strike.'

This scale of register, like the others, is a continuum, but at least five degrees of register based basically upon differences of setting/formality may often be recognized, as in this figure:

- |                   |                                                                                      |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Intimate :     | Conversation of intimates                                                            |
| 2. Casual :       | Talk at parties and in games                                                         |
| 3. Consultative : | Ordinary commercial transactions                                                     |
| 4. Frozen :       | One-directional communication by authorities at meetings, hearings, conferences etc. |

Two features of language which particularly depend on the setting within a speech situation are vernacular vs. non-vernacular usage, including use of taboo words, and hypercorrection and malapropism.

(i) **Vernacular and non-vernacular language.** Vernacular language is that of ordinary, carefree, colloquial speech. Use of vernacular forms in non-vernacular contexts could be evidence of the speaker's ignorance of the socially prescribed



'standard' language, and certain forms in particular are recognized as giving such evidence. These are linguistic social markers. An often noted American English example is *ain't*, the originally perfectly well-formed contraction of *am* + *not*, which fell into disrepute in standard English after it was extended out of first person singular as in third-person *He ain't*. Other English social markers are third person singular *don't* as in *he don't*, and demonstrative *them are mine*, *ain't?* for example, is common in the vernacular of many English-speaking communities, and its use in non-vernacular settings tends to guarantee the notice of listeners of other communities.

But such usage may also signal frankness and honesty, and solidarity with others whom speakers recognize as fellow members of their vernacular dialect. When used by obviously well-educated persons such interpretation is guaranteed. A standard dialect speaker of English who intentionally switches to the use of social markers such as *ain't* and *he don't* is said to seek covert prestige. Such prestige is 'covert' because its elicitation will often not, if successful, be consciously noted.

Deliberate (as opposed to instinctive) use of taboo words such as *fuck* and *shit*, may also seek covert prestige, but the strength of these as social markers makes this more difficult to achieve.

In a contrasting register, one uses unusually formal non-vernacular forms in vernacular contexts. For example, one will ordinarily say *It's me* to the question *Who is it?* asked by a familiar interlocutor; but, when asked the same question by one from whom one seeks prestige, the same speaker may say *It is I*. Similarly, except after prepositions Americans ordinarily say *who* in preference to *whom*: *Who did you ask?* not *Whom did you ask?* But in some circumstances the latter may be substituted. Such usage is said to seek overt prestige, because the often dubious prestige one gets from such usage is ordinarily consciously noted, hence 'overt'. One may use jargon similarly seeking overt prestige, saying, for example, *semantics* when nothing more than ordinary *meaning* is intended.

(ii) **Hypercorrection and malapropism.** Language use is such a valuable marker of social competence that one seeking the overt prestige of unfamiliar standard language usage may sometimes produce hypercorrections. A common English hypercorrection, for example, concerns the subject pronouns as in *They asked he and I* for traditional standard *They asked him and me*, and after prepositions *just between she and I* for *just between her and me*.

The object pronouns *me*, *him*, *her*, and *them*, are more frequent and earlier learned than subject pronouns *I*, *he*, *she*, and *they*, and there is a natural tendency, especially of child learners but persisting in adults, to substitute object pronouns for subject pronouns, especially after *and*, as in *Jack and me were there*, and in some dialects even before *and* as in *Him and me were there*. (Notice that the

same speakers would never say *Me was there*, but the presence of *and* in the subject somehow licenses the use of object pronouns.) Though common, such usage is stigmatized as a linguistic social marker, and fear of the stigma of this social marker is the opposite tendency to substitute subject pronouns for object pronouns. That is, as *he and I* may be a correction of *him and me*, *between you and I* is a hypercorrection of *between you and me*.

The lexical-morpheme equivalent of such hypercorrection of grammatical morphemes is known as malapropism: substituting similar sounding words for words which one doesn't know well, such as *ravished* for *ravaged* ('Fire ravished much of the business district').

### C. Subject and Function

Depending on the purpose of speaking, the subject or topic, and functions (as to assert, question, and persuade), we have more or less fluency or facility of grammatical competence, especially concerning vocabulary, and we can put this knowledge to use to express sociolinguistic competence as well.

(i) **Jargon and slang.** Professional and technical topics – including some talk about sports – may encourage the use of jargon, whereas familiar and strictly social topics are occasions for slang (sections 2.3 & 2.4). Auto mechanics and physicians, for example, won't often describe the same engine repair or medical condition to one another the way they would to their customers or patients, respectively, nor do gang members or friends talk about their activities among themselves the way they talk about these activities with others.

Jargon and slang provide lexical alternatives to more typical or ordinary usage (for example linguistic jargon *semantics* for *meaning*, and slang *cop* for *policeman*), and the choice slang alternative in preference to the ordinary language choice expresses an acknowledgement or claim of shared group membership and solidarity with the group which the jargon/slang choice typifies. At the base of the intentionally obfuscatory use of jargon (that is, intending not to be understood), the claim is an assertion of separateness, expertise, and perhaps more general superiority.

(ii) **Speaking vs. writing.** Speech and writing have different strengths and weaknesses. Certain subjects and/or functions of language tend to favour the use of speech or writing, and certain forms of language are encouraged or discouraged according to whether language is spoken or written. Contractions, vernacular usage, and slangs, for example, are often avoided in written styles, which also favour more complex syntax and lower frequency vocabulary. A marked distinction between the language of speaking and writing may have been more

apparent in the past, and is perhaps becoming less so today, particularly with the appearance of e-mail, and on-line electronic communication, for which traditional standards and expectations of written form often seem not to apply.

(iii) **Attention to speech.** Different functions or purpose of language use tend to determine different degrees of attention to speech. In the intimate register friends and family members talking about familiar topics pay almost no attention to how they speak, whereas in the 'frozen' register, as in writing instructions to assemble something complicated, how things are said is almost as critical as what is said. A lot of research has revealed a regular continuum of greater to lesser use of certain linguistic features generally reflecting degree of attention to speech. For example, the substitution of *runnin'* for *running* varies according to whether one is speaking casually, speaking carefully, or reading.

(iv) **Linguistic characteristics of genres.** Research supports our intuition that certain linguistic features tend positively or negatively to characterize discourse of certain types. For example,

a. contractions tend to occur in conversation and to be absent in formal writing.

b. passive verbs tend to occur in scientific and technical writing and to be absent in speech and informal writing; and

c. third-person pronouns and past tense verbs tend to occur in narratives.

Certain sets of linguistic features have been found to characterize certain functionally-defined types of spoken and written language, of genres. Biber (1988) analysed texts totaling 960,000 words representing 23 spoken and written genres, including the six listed below for the occurrence of 67 linguistic features.

1. (Personally) involved ↔ informational

a. first-person pronouns

b. wh-questions

c. final prepositions

2. Narrative ↔ Non-narrative

a. past tense verbs

b. third-person pronouns

c. negative feature present tense verbs

3. Situation independent ↔ situation dependent

- a. relative clauses (*a book that I liked, someone whom you know, ...*)
- b. nominalizations with *-ment, -ness, -tion, -ity*
- c. negative feature : time and place adverbs
- 4. Persuasive ↔ Non-persuasive
  - a. suasive verbs (*agree, ask, demand, etc.*)
  - b. conditional subordination
  - c. necessity modals (*must, ought, etc.*)
- 5. Abstract ↔ Concrete
  - a. passive verbs (*is known, was seen, ...*)
  - b. past participial clauses (for example : *known for such behavior, he ...*)
  - c. high type/token ratio (*many different words*)
- 6. More ↔ Less on-time informational elaboration
  - a. that-clauses as objects of verbs (*know that ..., believe that ...*)
  - b. demonstratives (*this, that, ...*)
  - c. negative feature : phrase co-ordination (NP and NP, VP and VP)

Source : Biber 1988

By factor analysis, a statistical procedure which recognizes those factors/features which significantly tend to co-occur, Biber discovered six sets of linguistic features, which could be understood to characterize six functional dimensions of language. The linguistic features of each dimension seem reasonably to characterize the dimension as described – for example, in genres high on the more personally involved, less ‘informational’ dimension, the number of first-person pronouns, wh-questions, and final prepositions increases.

These six dimensions of language purpose or function are found in spoken and written genres, and the set of linguistic features which characterizes each is the same in both sorts of texts.

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### 13.5 Let us sum up

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In this unit we have discussed the following :

A language accommodates different linguistic levels or styles termed registers.

Different speech situations determine different registers.

There are different linguistic features of register.

The non-linguistic features of register are :



(i) speakers

(ii) setting

(iii) subject

The characteristics of language which depends on the relationship between a speaker and an audience are :

(i) forms of address

(ii) politeness morphology

(iii) ellipsis

(iv) contractions

(v) code-switching

The features of language which depend on the setting within a speech situation are :

(i) vernacular and non-vernacular language

(ii) hypercorrection and malapropism

The purpose of speaking and the subject or topic may encourage the use of the following :

(i) jargon and slang

(ii) speech instead of writing

(iii) different degrees of attention to speech

(iv) use of certain linguistic features

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### 13.6 Comprehension exercises

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1. What do you understand by the term 'register' in a language? Show by examples how different speech situations determine different registers?

2. Give examples of the linguistic features of register.

3. What are the three important non-linguistic features influencing register?

4. Discuss how the relationship between the speakers influence register.

5. Write short notes on :

(i) Code-switching

(ii) Ellipsis

(iii) Malapropism

(iv) Use of jargon and slang

#### Activities

1. Consider the following six ways of expressing a request to borrow five



hundred rupees. Arrange them on a scale of politeness from most polite to least polite.

- (i) How bout lettin me borrow five hundred rupees ?
- (ii) Could you lend me five hundred rupees ?
- (iii) Would you please lend me five hundred rupees ?
- (iv) I'd appreciate if you lend me five hundred rupees.
- (v) Lemme borrow five hundred bucks.
- (vi) Do you suppose you could let me borrow five hundred rupees?

2. Suppose you need to pass through a crowd of people. Suggest a number of ways to ask people to step aside and let you through arranged on a scale of politeness. After you have written out your different requests or demands, write each one on a separate piece of paper and ask a friend to arrange them on the same scale. Of course it will be extremely difficult for two people to agree fully on this order.

3. Listen to a broadcast of any sports event and

- (a) list five specialized ways of talking about and describing the sport.
- (b) list ten items of specialized vocabulary of the sport.

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## 13.7 Glossary

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**Speech situation** : the term usually refers to any situation which is associated with speech e.g. a classroom lesson, a party.

**Ellipsis** : the leaving out of words or phrases from sentences where they are unnecessary because they have already been referred to or mentioned. For example, when the verb in two co-ordinated clauses is the same, it may be omitted to avoid repetition :

Mary ate an apple and Jane (ate) a pear. (verb ellipsis)

**Contraction** : the reduction of a linguistic form and often its combination with another form. For example :

I shall into I'll.

**Code switching** : a change by a speaker or writer from one language or language variety to another one. A person may start speaking one language and then change to another one in the middle of his/her speech or sometimes even in the middle of a sentence.

**Jargon** : usually speech or writing containing specialized words or constructions, e.g. The jargon of law, medical jargon.

**Factor analysis** : a technique used to determine what underlying variables account for the correlations among different observed variables. For example, if we give a group of students tests in geometry, algebra, arithmetic, reading and

writing. we can find out what factors are common to all the tests using factor analysis.

**Slang** : very informal words and expressions that are common in spoken language and are not considered suitable for formal situations. Slang is sometimes restricted to one particular group of people, e.g. soldiers.

**Taboo words** : words that are often considered offensive, shocking or rude as they refer to restricted or forbidden areas of interest.

**Genre** : a particular style or type especially of works of art or literature. The novel and the short story belong to two different literary genres.

**Vernacular** : a term used of a language or language variety when

(a) it is contrasted with a classical language such as Latin.

(b) when it is contrasted with an internationally used language such as English.

(c) in bilingual and multilingual countries when it is spoken by some or most of the population but when it is not the official or the National Language of a country.

**Hypercorrection** : extreme care in speech or writing, especially in an attempt to speak or write in an educated manner.

For example, a speaker of a non-standard variety of English, when speaking formally, may practise more self-correction and use more formal vocabulary than speakers of a standard variety of English.

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## 13.8 Bibliography

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## Unit 14 □ Style

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- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Definition of style
- 14.3 Stylistic choice
- 14.4 Style and the norm
- 14.5 Style markers
- 14.6 Stylistic analysis
- 14.7 Let us sum up
- 14.8 Comprehension Exercises
- 14.9 Activities
- 14.10 Glossary
- 14.11 Bibliography

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### 14.1 Introduction

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Both the foreign speaker of English and the native speaker need to develop an awareness of different varieties of the language. We should learn to analyse our speaking and writing habits and those of others, to discover and describe the patterns which differentiate varieties of language from each other, to explain as far as possible why people speak in a certain way and to determine what alternative forms of expression they choose to use or ignore in particular situations. In this unit we shall try to find out what style really is and its various features.

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### 14.2 Definition of style

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'Style' is a familiar word to most of us but it is extremely difficult to define style. The word 'style' has a multiplicity of definitions. A popular definition of style is 'saying the right thing in the most effective way'. Here style is used in an evaluative sense, referring to the effectiveness of a mode of expression. Thus when we talk of a 'clear' or 'refined' style, we are making a value judgement on the overall effect of the language on ourselves.

Style may refer to some or all of the language habits of one person as when we talk of Shakespeare's style or Jane Austen's style. However more often it refers to a selection of language habits, which characterize an individual.

Similarly, style may refer to some or all of the language habits shared by a group of people at one time or over a period of time as when we talk of the style of the Augustan poets.

Let us now look at some of the definitions of style.

According to Stendhal, '*style consists in adding to a given thought all the circumstances calculated to produce the whole effect that the thought ought to produce*'.

To Stendhal, *style is an addition whose function is defined not in terms of beauty but in terms of expediency and effect*.

To Charles Bally, language is a set of means of expression which are simultaneous with thought. A speaker can give his thoughts an objective, intellectual form which conforms to reality as closely as possible. More often, he chooses to add various affective elements that partly reflect his ego and partly the social forces he is subject to.

A modern version of the very frequent view of *style as choice* is that of Brooks and Warren who use the word *style* entirely to refer to the selection and ordering of language.

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### 14.3 Stylistic choice

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Even if we approve of the idea of style as choice, we must distinguish between different types of choice that are manifested in language. For example, the choice between *drizzling* and *pouring* for *X* in *it was X*. Both *it was drizzling* and *it was pouring* are grammatically possible.

But the speaker will prefer one to the other in a given situation. Such choice will be called non-stylistic. Another type of selection appears in the choice between *fine man* and *nice chap* for *X* in *he is an X*. Both are grammatically possible and even idiomatic and both have a certain range of frames and referents in common. This type of choice may be labelled as stylistic. It is important to note that stylistic choice exists in a number of different levels not only in the lexis. It may involve phonetic features, phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, sentences and larger units.

Stylistic choice then seems to be a choice between items that mean roughly the same, whereas non-stylistic choice involves selection between different meanings. Thus Jeremy Warburg says, 'Good style, it seems to me, consists in choosing the appropriate symbolization of the experience you wish to convey, from among a number of words whose meaning area is roughly, but only roughly the same (by saying *cat*, for example, rather than *pussy*)'.



According to Charles W. Hockett, '... two utterances in the same language which convey approximately the same information, but which are different in their linguistic structures, can be said to differ in style:' for example, the two sentences 'Sir, I have the honor to inform you and Jeez, boss, get a load of dis...' (p. 556), evoke two so different situations that one may hesitate before regarding their information as approximately the same. The 'meaning-area' is difficult to determine. Style becomes part of meaning and two stylistically different utterances can never mean exactly the same. The definition of style as choice, then, leads to problems whose resolution is difficult.

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## 14.4 Style and the norm

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There are some difficulties involved in the use of choice as the basis of style. Let us consider the following definition of style:

'Style is defined as an individual's deviation from norms for the situations in which he is encoding, these deviations being in the statistical properties of those structural features for which there exist some degree of choice in his code' (Mehta).

As style can be defined as a deviation from a norm, the question arises whether it could be defined positively, in terms of a norm rather than in terms of deviations. We can of course say that texts which differ in the same way from a given norm are in the same style. The question is, can we do without the norm? Generally we may distinguish a host of norm-defining features in a number of styles. Such features may be stated in terms of metre (heroic couplets), time (Elizabethan style), place (Yankee humour), writer (Byronic style), literary work (euphemism), language, dialect, social situation and so forth. Again, all such norms seem to be circumscribed by contexts including time, place and situation. All of them presuppose definition of a norm. Here the emphasis is put on similarities, not differences between the given text and the norm. Thus it is difficult to define style in the positive terms of a norm.

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## 14.5 Style markers

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The concept of style markers is intimately linked with the view of style as choice. Style markers can be defined as those linguistic items that only appear, or are most or least frequent in, one group of categories. In other words, style markers are contextually bound linguistic elements. Elements that are not style markers are stylistically neutral.

Thus some otherwise meaningless repetitions of linguistic items acquire



meaning as style markers. For instance, the swearing and cursing of a soldier introduces a stream of stylistically significant items that is style reminders into statements that would otherwise remain more neutral. The origin of slang can be sought in an effort to create and introduce new style markers unavailable in the existing linguistic items.

Thus stylistic choice is simply the context-bound use of style markers. Contextually bound linguistic items function as style markers. Style markers occurring in the same text form a stylistic set for that text. A stylistic set shared by a large number of contextually related texts forms a major stylistic set occurring within a major contextual range. Texts sharing the same major stylistic set are in the same major style. Style markers consist of statistical trends or of mutually exclusive items.

Allowance has to be made for different speakers' use of different styles in the same, stylistically ambiguous context. If stylistic sets which have been proved different by previous analyses occur within the same text, we have an instance of one or several shifts of style. The use of a stylistic set in an unambiguously alien context may be labelled as contextual transfer. Once some important contextual groupings, style markers, stylistic sets and major styles have been found and defined, the teacher can draw upon this material in the teaching of style in a foreign language. In many teaching situations, passive recognition and active use of important style markers and stylistic sets may deserve a high priority.

### Style Shift

Many literary effects are based on a shift of style, which may be defined as a switch from one stylistic set to another. In terms of our basic definition of style, it involves a shift in the probabilities of the linguistic items of the text as measured against one and the same contextual norm. If, for instance, a clergyman delivering a sermon shifts from biblical idiom to colloquial English, this lowers the probabilities of his linguistic items as matched against biblical and pulpit norms. This same change may be regarded as a norm shift if for some reason we find it more expedient to match the probabilities, no longer against those of biblical English but against those of colloquial usage.

The intentional or unintentional use of a style marker or a stylistic set in an unambiguously alien context might be labelled as contextual transfer. Its effects vary from the striking through the humorous, the awkward and the rude to the disastrous.

In many types of texts, such as plays and novels, different passages often use different styles. The style of a narrative passage, for instance, may contrast with that of dialogue or interior monologue. Such shifts of style are obviously

accompanied by shifts of context. The same holds true of the speech of different characters, the speaker being part of the context of what he says. Those subvarieties of style which correlate with the varying social roles of a given speaker or writer may be called registers.

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## 14.6 Stylistic analysis

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Stylistic analysis has as its end the clarification of the full meaning and potential of language in use.

The language of newspaper headlines, church services, sports commentaries, popular songs, advertising have different registers at work. There are very great differences in the nature of the situational variables involved in these uses of English and it is inconsistent, unresalistic and confusing to obscure these differences by grouping everything under the same heading.

There are many aspects of the way in which English is used and while it is impossible to achieve completeness, the extent to which stylistic theories are at the moment inadequate should at least be admitted and the difficulties outlined.

The lack of large-scale formal empirical analysis is well displayed when situational categories such as newspaper reporting are set up, and assumed to have a predictable linguistic identity. It takes only a little analysis of texts to show that many such generalizations are of very little descriptive value. In fact the majority of the situations claimed to be stylistically distinctive have hardly been studied at all from the linguistic point of view, and many of the labels used are vague in the extreme (e.g. 'science', 'literature').

Further, in the published work on the subject, there seem to be many hidden assumptions that can be seriously questioned, for example, that there is a one-for-one correlation between linguistic features and situation, or that the language can be predicted from the situation and the situation from the language with the same degree of certainty. Such assumptions are not valid in our experience; we shall discuss them further below. Finally we find a great deal of difficulty in understanding the use of such terms as 'restricted language', 'norm' (or 'normal'), 'discourse', 'standard', and, 'situation' in the literature. Often a word is in both an everyday and a specialist sense, without the difference being explicitly recognized.

We cannot but conclude that stylistic theory, at the time of writing, has reached a stage where it would do well to wait for practical analysis to catch up, so that the theoretical categories may be tested against a wide range of data, and more detailed analysis of texts carried out. Consequently, further theorizing in this book is kept to a minimum: we are mainly concerned to establish certain central notions that do not seem to have been sufficiently rigorously defined and verified hitherto.

The main procedural difficulty, which we have already had cause to refer to, arises from the fact that linguistic features do not usually correlate in any neat one-for-one way with the situational variables in an extra-linguistic context. It is of course possible to find examples in most utterances from which predictions can be made with confidence about the situation, or some aspect of the situation. Utterances from religious or legal English are particularly clear in this respect. But even here linguistic feature is frequently ambiguous as to its situational function, indicating more than one variable simultaneously: much of the grammatical idiosyncrasy of written legal and religious English, for example, has a double illegible manuscript contributing both to province and to status. As analysis shows, any piece of discourse contains a large number of features which are difficult to relate to specific variables in the extra linguistic context, even though they may be felt to have some kind of stylistic value. The majority of linguistic features in English have little or no predictive power, that is they are ambiguous indications of the situational variables in the extralinguistic contexts in which they are used. This state of affairs must be recognized by any adequate theory of language variation. And if, working the other way round, one specifies a situation and tries to predict its linguistic features, it is impossible to make reliable predictions about any but a small number of features.

It may, of course, be convenient to posit a one-for-one correlation between a set of linguistic forms and a situation, but while this relation does sometimes genuinely exist, it would be a mistake to assume that it always exists, and to talk rigidly in terms of 'one language one situation'. It is more meaningful instead to talk of ranges of appropriateness and acceptability of various uses of language to given situations. Thus, in situation X, feature Y will be highly probable, but one must allow for the possibility of feature Z occurring, other things being equal for instance, the introduction of informality where on all other occasions one has experienced formality. Situations in which positively only one set of stylistic features is permitted, with no variation allowed (or, to put it another way, where it is possible to state confidently that the following features will never occur here ...), are far outnumbered by those situations where alternative sets of features are possible, though not usually equiprobable.

It is, then, unreasonable to expect that all situational variables are equally predictable from the language data. The number of constraints influencing the use of language varies from one situation to another: some situations are very clearly predictable, with many constraints; others are vague. Therefore we prefer to see this notion of language-situation predictability as a scale, with linguistic features which are to all intents and purposes totally predictable at one end, features which are entirely unpredictable within the English speech community at the other, and, in between, features showing many different degrees of



predictability, some very restricted, some less so. This of course is the interesting area for study. The totally predictable cases, which are those usually cited in the literature on this subject, are relatively uninteresting precisely because of their predictability; they are usually intuitively obvious. It is the area between the extremes which is in need of study.

Another way of making this point, but from a different angle, is to introduce a 'scale of utilization' of the formal linguistic features in English. At one end of the scale there are uses of English where the total range of conceivable linguistic forms might occur (as in literature); at the other end there are uses where only a very small number of forms ever occur, some linguistic systems available in the rest of the language being completely unused – for example, in the language of knitting patterns, parade-ground commands, heraldic language; and certain kinds of weather forecasting. For uses of this latter type, the label 'restricted language' has sometimes been used; but it is probably more useful to see these uses as being simply at the most restricted end of a scale of increasing restrictedness, rather than to posit any difference in kind.

### **The Language of Conversation**

Conversation is without doubt the most commonly used kind of English, and consequently a variety which will be more familiar to the vast majority of English-speaking people than any other. We can confidently claim that everyone makes use of this kind of English every day, whereas this claim could not be made of any other variety of English. Also, from the pedagogical viewpoint, the sort of English used in a conversational situation, excluding the extreme kinds of non-fluency, would seem to be the most useful and least artificial kind to teach foreign students of English as a means of everyday communication. Such practical reasons are quite important.

A relevant procedural reason for choosing this variety first is that conversation is a very convenient kind of English, in that it provides us with a great deal to discuss at all levels of analysis. Very often in stylistics, much of the interest in a text is concentrated at one level; a variety may be primarily distinguished through its phonology, or vocabulary, for example. Here, however, all levels of analysis provide important information about the character of the variety. There seems also to be a much greater flexibility of usage in this variety than in any other: there are fewer restrictions on the kind of structures that may be used, consequently one is liable to find in any extract of conversation that a wider range of contrasts operates at any level than could be expected elsewhere. A further procedural point for a pedagogically orientated book is that as this is the most familiar variety in English, it will be easier for readers to check the linguistic facts presented in our description with their intuitions, and thus

make their own assessment of the extent to which our extracts are a representative and helpful sample, than if some less familiar variety had been chosen.

In view of these factors, and the general agreement in linguistics on the primacy of speech in language study, it might seem odd that so little linguistic research has been carried out into this variety of English. There have been occasional informative articles, such as those by Abercrombie and Quirk, but these are sporadic in their comments; their main value is to focus attention on certain dominant and yet neglected features of this kind of English. There is little, and no detailed survey. Far more is known in fact about such varieties of spoken English as advertising or preaching. There is however one very good reason for this lack of information, namely, the procedural difficulty of obtaining reliable data to investigate. It is well-known that most people will behave differently if they are aware of being tape-recorded, and as a result the language they use simply cannot be taken as a reliable sample of spontaneous informal conversation. Even if it seems that they have 'forgotten' about the microphone, the data cannot be trusted. In our experience, there seems to be a cyclic pattern of forgetting and remembering about the microphone, with consequent alterations in the manner of speaking. The only safe way of obtaining data is through the technique of 'surreptitious' recording and this requires a degree of technical preparation which precludes its frequent use.

### **The Language of Newspaper reporting**

In a newspaper besides news items, we find articles, reviews, imaginative writing of various kinds, advertisements and much more.

If we look at various newspaper reports we will find that the most obvious visual feature is the paragraphing, the way in which the narrative as a whole is spilt into smaller units.

Frequent use is made of inverted commas in a variety of functions. They are used for direct quotation or to spotlight terms for particular attention.

The use of dashes is also interesting and characteristic of this kind of writing.

Adverbials are extremely common in newspaper reporting and their positioning is also very interesting. Apart from the small group of adverbs which have a fixed position or a relatively fixed position before the verb, adverbials tend to come towards the end of a clause, either after the verb or at the very end.

The issue every reader is faced with is first and foremost to decide how the information he has been presented with is to be interpreted. A topic can be presented to the public in very different lights. It is up to us to judge how the language vehicle used can play a vital role in this respect.



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## 14.7 Let us sum up

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The word style has a multiplicity of definitions.

Stylistic choice involves the choice between two items which mean roughly the same while non-stylistic choice involves the choice between different meanings.

Style markers are contextually bound linguistic elements.

Style may be defined as a deviation from a norm but there are a number of difficulties involved in it.

Stylistic analysis involves the clarification of the full meaning and the potential of the language in use.

The language of newspaper reports, church services, conversation have different registers at work. We have discussed here the various features of the

- a. language of conversation
- b. language of newspaper reports.

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## 14.8 Comprehension exercises

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1. What is the difference between stylistic and non-stylistic choice?
2. What are style markers ?
3. Discuss style shift with an example.
4. Discuss stylistic analysis.
5. What are the various features of the language of conversations?

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## 14.9 Activities

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1. Consider a newspaper report. Look at the subheading. Now examine its relation to the body of the text. What do you think is the function of the subheading?

2. A typical news item begins in this way : *Three people were injured when a private car collided with a minibus during the rush hour yesterday.* Occasionally there will be a follow up, for example. *The minibus was trying to overtake ...*

Discuss the important features of this type of reporting. Look at any daily paper and see what variations on this theme exist.

3. There is often an obscure boundary between what is news and what is discussion in a report. Examine a number of newspaper reports to consider this and make your own notes about it.

4. Record an authentic conversation. Then compare it with a radio drama and make a note of the differences.

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## 14.10 Glossary

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**Stylistics** : the study of that variation in language (style) which is dependant on the situation in which the language is used and also on the effect the writer or speaker wishes to create on the reader or hearers.

**Reader or Hearer** : Although stylistics sometimes includes investigations of spoken language, it usually refers to the study of written language, including literary texts. Stylistics is concerned with choices that are available to a writer and the reasons why particular forms and expressions are used rather than others.

**Norm** : that which is considered appropriate in speech or writing for a particular situation or purpose within a particular group or community. The norm for an informal situation may be very different from the norm for a formal one.

**Dialect** : a variety of a language, spoken in one part of a country (regional dialect), or by people belonging to a particular social class (social dialect or sociolect), which is different in some words, grammar, and/or pronunciation from other forms of the same language. Sometimes a dialect gains and becomes the standard variety of a country.

**Encoding** : the process of turning a message into a set of symbols as part of the act of communication.

**Decoding** : the process of trying to understand the meaning of a word, phrase or sentence.

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## Unit 15 □ Semantics

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### Structure

- 15.0 Objectives
- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 What is meaning ?
- 15.3 Elements of meaning
- 15.4 Sources of meaning
- 15.5 Meaning relations
- 15.6 Meaning and Generative Transformational Grammar
- 15.7 Let us sum up
- 15.8 Comprehension Exercises
- 15.9 Activities
- 15.10 Glossary
- 15.11 Bibliography

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### 15.0 Objectives

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In this unit we will discuss semantics in general terms. Semantics focuses on words, phrases, signs and symbols and what they stand for. The study of semantics intersects with many other fields such as lexicology, syntax and pragmatics. If you read this unit you will learn about all of these.

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### 15.1 Introduction

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This unit helps you to study semantics. Semantics is the study of meaning. But we should first try to find out what is meaning.

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### 15.2 What is meaning ?

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This question has been debated for a number of years but no satisfactory answer has been found as yet. It is the most widely accepted theory of semantics that meanings are ideas or concepts which can be transformed from one mind to another by embodying them in the forms of one language or another. However the identification of meanings with concepts will not help us to answer the question "What is meaning ?" until and unless the term *concept* is clearly defined.

## What is concept ?

It is very difficult to define the term concept. For example the word *school* can be associated with different images for different people. Very often there is little or nothing common in the very personal images. Yet we still wish to say that, in general, people use words with more or less the same meaning. Thus we face considerable problems in dealing with meaning. A simple word like *table* can create a number of problems. It appears to have distinctly different meanings, for example 'dining table' and 'table an amendment'. A word like *good* creates even more problems. What shared meaning does *good* have in good beating, good book, good knife, good idea, good race, good reason, good water and good woman? The connotative uses of words add further complications to any theorizings about meaning, particularly their uses in metaphoric and poetic language. Any understanding of connotation, metaphor and poetic language must be based on an understanding of what may be called the 'normal use of language'. A serious problem, of course arises in determining where the norm is located. Is it located in the speakers, in the language itself or in the contexts in which communication takes place? If the norm is located in the speakers of a language, how does the philosopher, psychologist or linguist gain access to it? If the norm is located in the language itself, how do the speakers learn the norm and what kind of claim is it that the norm is somehow independent of its users? If the norm is located in the contexts in which communication takes place, exactly what kind of process is communication and what are its distinctive characteristics? Many different answers have been proposed to the questions. Psychologists have tried to assess the availability of certain kinds of responses to objects, to experiences and to words themselves, particularly in laboratory experiments using verbal stimuli. Communication developed information theory so that they can use mathematical models to explain what is predictable and what is not predictable when messages are channelled through various kinds of communication networks. From these varying approaches a bewildering array of conceptions of meaning emerges.

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### 15.3 Elements of meaning

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Geoffrey Leech breaks down *meaning* into seven types :

1. conceptual meaning
2. connotative meaning
3. stylistic meaning
4. affective meaning
5. reflected meaning



6. collocative meaning

7. thematic meaning.

**Conceptual meaning** or denotation deals with the core meaning of expressions. Conceptually 'cow' is 'an adult female bovine animal'.

**Connotative meaning** is the meaning which is attributed to a given expression by its users. So it is not part of what is conceived; it is part of what is perceived. For example the fact that a cow is often looked upon as a sacred animal is a part of connotative meaning.

**Stylistic meaning** is the meaning conveyed by an expression regarding the sociocultural backdrop of the users of the language. For example, using the word 'buck' for a dollar or rupee is the stylistic meaning of the word.

**Affective meaning** comprises the personal feelings of the encoder including his/her attitude to the decoder and to the topic of discourse.

**Reflected meaning** is the effect of one meaning on another meaning of the same word.

**Collocative meaning** consists of the meaning acquired by a word under the influence of word(s) which it co-occurs with. For example 'cold coffee' and 'cold war'.

**Thematic meaning** is the meaning conveyed by the structure of the discourse where concepts like *topic* of discourse and *focus* of discourse are identified. *Topic* or *theme* is what or who we talk about. *Focus* is the new information we give to the learner. For example, in the following sentence 'baby' is the *topic* of the discourse and 'cried' is the *focus* of discourse.

The baby (T) cried (F).

Leech uses a core term for reflected meaning, collocative meaning, affective meaning, stylistic meaning, and connotative meaning, viz. **associative meaning** because they are all open-ended in character and lend themselves to discussion in terms of ranges.

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## 15.4 Sources of meaning

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Let us now look at the different sources of meaning. The major part of the meaning of what we say or write is located in the words we use. This type of meaning is called *lexical meaning*.

The choice and organization of grammatical items also contribute to the meaning of a sentence. This type of meaning is called grammatical or *syntactic meaning*.

When we utter a sentence we use a specific intonation pattern to go with it. The meaning encoded by intonation is called *intonational meaning*. Phonological

meaning includes intonational meaning. In writing, punctuation reflects intonational meaning to a large extent.

We also have *utterance meaning* the status of which is more controversial. The meaning of an utterance includes but is not exhausted by the meaning of a sentence that is uttered. The rest of the meaning is contributed by a variety of factors that may be referred to as contextual.

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## 15.5 Meaning relations

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It has been realized that statements, questions and commands are only a few of the many functionally distinguishable **speech acts** which are systematically interrelated in various ways.

We can draw a distinction between the *descriptive meaning* of statements and the *non-descriptive meaning* of other kinds of speech acts. We can also identify the descriptive meaning of an utterance with the proposition that is asserted in statements and may be presented though not asserted in other speech acts notably in questions. For example, we can look at the following utterances which are intended and understood as a statement and a question respectively.

(a) *John gets up late.*

(b) *Does John get up late?*

The utterances can be said to present or contain the same proposition though only assert it and thereby describe or purport to describe a particular situation. It is the defining property of propositions that they have a definite truth-value, i.e. they are either true or false. There is therefore an intrinsic connection between descriptive meaning and truth. It is this connection which is at the very heart of truth-conditional semantics.

Thus some utterances at least may have both a descriptive meaning and a non-descriptive meaning. In fact it is arguable that the vast majority of everyday utterances whether they are statements or not or whether they have descriptive meaning or not convey that kind of non-descriptive meaning which is commonly referred to as expressive.

Expressive meaning relates to everything that falls within the scope of 'self-expression' and can be sub-divided in various ways. One kind of expressive meaning to which both literary critics and moral philosophers have paid particular attention is emotive or affective meaning.

Somewhat different from expressive meaning though often interdependent is **social meaning**. This refers to the use of language to establish and maintain social roles and social relations. This is called phatic communion, i.e. communication by means of speech.

Every language contains a vocabulary or lexicon which not only lists the lexemes of the language but associates with each lexeme all the information

that is required by the rules of the grammar. Not all lexemes are word-lexemes, i.e. lexemes whose forms are word-forms but phrasal lexemes, i.e. lexemes whose forms are phrases in the traditional sense of the term. For example, 'put up with', 'red herring' etc.

When a semantically idiomatic phrasal lexeme can be put into correspondence with a non-idiomatic phrasal expression, it is traditional to say that the latter has a literal meaning in contrast with the idiomatic, metaphorical or figurative meaning of the former.

There can be a number of phrasal lexemes in any language but it is difficult to distinguish them from clichés or fixed collocations.

It is also difficult to distinguish between homonymy and polysemy.

**Homonyms** are different words with the same form. For example, 'bank' (the side of a river) and 'bank' (financial institution) are homonyms as they are pronounced and spelt alike.

**Polysemy** is different from homonymy. Polysemy refers to multiple meanings. For example, the noun 'neck' which has several distinguishable meanings, is polysemous.

The word 'neck' means 'part of the body'. It can also mean 'part of a bottle', 'part of ship or a garment', 'narrow strip of land' etc.

Polysemy can also be distinguished from synonymy. **Synonymy** refers to the phenomenon of more than one form having the same meaning. Lexemes can be said to be **completely synonymous** if and only if they have the same descriptive, expressive and social meaning. They are **absolutely synonymous** if and only if they have the same distribution and are completely synonymous in all their meanings and in all their contexts of occurrence. At present 'radio' has almost ousted 'wireless' though they co-existed for a while as alternatives for many speakers of British English, 'aerodrome', 'airport', 'airfield' now differ in their descriptive meaning.

**Descriptive synonymy** also called **cognitive** or **referential synonymy** is what many semanticists would regard as synonymy properly so called. Examples are 'father', 'dad', 'daddy', 'pop' etc. There may be social taboos operative within the language community such that the use of particular words indicates membership of particular groups within the community. Thus euphemism – the avoidance of taboo words is an important factor that has been changing the meaning of words.

There can also be differences of **connotation** of lexemes. For example there are differences of connotation between 'church' and 'chapel' in England and Wales. Connotations of a lexeme often fall within the scope expressive or social

meaning.

A lexeme which is related in a relevant way to other lexemes is related to them in sense and a lexeme which is related in a relevant way to the outside world is related by means of **denotation**. For example, 'cow', 'animal', 'bull', 'calf' etc. constitute a set of lexemes within which there hold sense-relations of various kinds.

**Antonymy** is oppositeness of sense. For example, good : bad, above : below etc. Some consider incompatibility a more comprehensive term than antonymy. For example, 'red', 'white', 'blue' are considered incompatibles.

**Hyponymy** is a relationship between two words in which the meaning of one of the words includes the meaning of the other word. For example the words 'animal' and 'dog' are related in such a way that 'dog' refers to a type of 'animal' and 'animal' is a general term that includes 'dog' and other types of animals. The specific term 'dog' is called a hyponym and the general term 'animal' is called a **superordinate**.

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## 15.6 Meaning and Generative-Transformational Grammar

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Both componential analysis and studies of marking reveal a concern with finding ultimate semantic units or components for use in studies of meaning. A similar kind of concern arises in attempts to deal with meaning within generative-transformational theory.

What we need now is some understanding of those words and the set of rules, that is, some understanding of the semantic system or the semantic component, of a generative-transformational grammar.

We are therefore assuming a model of generative-transformational grammar, which has the syntactic component as its central component and two 'interpretative' components (semantic and phonological) on its periphery. The syntactic component, together with the words which are somehow 'fitted' into it, provides both a deep structure (derived from the phrase-structure rules) and a surface structure (derived through the transformational rules). This structure is given a semantic interpretation through the semantic component and a phonological realization through the phonological component.

### Semantic Features

One of the first difficulties that arises in any attempt to spell out the details of a possible semantic component of a generative-transformational grammar is that of deciding how best to represent the units of meaning that we wish to



introduce into deep syntactic structures. One solution is to introduce words as complete units, for example hope, house, cat, man, and so on, along with additional information concerning the syntactic category (noun, verb, adjective, and so on). We can also provide the basic phonological information which will later allow us to derive the actual pronunciation once all the necessary phonological rules have applied.

However, if we do not impose any restrictions, except gross grammatical ones, on what can occur with what in the deep structure, we would permit our grammar to generate the sentences in both the a and b series that follow :

- |                           |                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. That's a fond hope.    | b. *That's red hope.       |
| The house remained empty. | *The house breathed.       |
| The cat died.             | *The cat spoke.            |
| The man spoke.            | *The man which came spoke. |

We cannot fail to observe that the sentences in the b series are somehow anomalous. We would almost certainly want to write rules that would prevent our grammar from generating such sentences. The problem seems to be one of specifying permissible relationships among words, these relationships being more subtle than simple noun-verb or adjective-noun relationships since they require classifying these various parts of speech according to certain semantic components. The rules would then recognize these additional classifications so as to disallow hope to be red, houses to breathe, cats to speak, or man to be referred to by 'which'.

A solution to the difficulty might reside in specifying certain semantic features for words whenever these features have important syntactic correlates, the ignoring of which results in anomalous sentences. Consequently, we may choose to assign at least the following semantic features to the nouns given above :

| hope       | house     | cat       | man       |
|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| +noun      | +noun     | +noun     | +noun     |
| - concrete | +concrete | +concrete | +concrete |
| - animate  | - animate | + animate | + animate |
| - human    | - human   | - human   | + human   |

The phrase-structure rules would permit an adjective such as 'red', specified



among other things for the semantic feature [+concrete] to be used as a modifier of a noun specified also as [+concrete] but not of a noun specified as [-concrete]; consequently, \*red hope would not be allowed likewise, the verb 'breathe' would require co-occurrence with a subject specified as [+animate]; therefore, \*house breathed would not be allowed. The verb 'speak' would require a subject specified as [+human], but since cat is [-human], \*cat spoke would be disallowed. The pronoun 'which' replaces noun phrases, the head nouns of which must be specified as [-human]; however, man in \*man which came is clearly a head noun that is [+human].

The problem of specifying the total set of features that is required for a language, or for languages in general is an enormous one. One difficulty is knowing how far to go in specifying features. Since almost every word differs from every other word in meaning, we might argue that as many features are necessary as there are words, in which case little advantage seems to be gained in specifying features at all. In addition, certain verbs require specific kinds of subjects or objects. The verb 'speak' requires a subject specified as [+time]. Hours, days, and years elapse, but not cars, hope, and oranges. In specific cases all relevant features become apparent. Verbs like 'scatter' and 'disperse' are still more complicated because either the subjects or the objects must be specified as [+numerous], since each of the sentences 1 through 6 is possible :

1. The crowd scattered.
2. The farmer scattered the seed.
3. The airplane scattered the spectators.
4. The mob dispersed.
5. The emperor dispersed the crowd.
6. The gas dispersed the platoon.

However, sentences 7 through 10 are not possible :

7. \* The farmer scattered.
8. \* The farmer scattered the tree.
9. \* The gas dispersed the boy.

Sentences 1 and 2 are also useful for distinguishing semantic plurality from syntactic plurality. 'Crowd' in sentence 1 and 'seed' in sentence 2 are semantically plural, or [+numerous], but syntactically singular. These sentences differ in meaning from sentences 11 and 12, in which crowds and seeds are syntactically plural, a fact indicated by the presence of the "plural" morpheme, spelled s in

this case.

11. The crowds scattered.

12. The farmer scattered the seeds.

Still another difference exists between crowd and seed; we can say much seed, but much crowd is not possible. The feature [count] is required to show this difference. Seed may be specified as either [-count] or [+count] giving both much seed and many seeds however crowd must be specified as [+count], for while many crowds is possible much crowd is not. Many and much seem to co-occur with the [+count] and [-count] features respectively; in specifying quantities we can compare many men in which men is [+count], and much milk, in which milk is [-count].

### Features and Transformations

If the problem of the apparently excessive regression of feature specification can be solved, we could specify not only certain important common meaning elements for vocabulary items but also co-occurrence restrictions. A feature system would also enable us to reduce the amount of tree diagramming required to represent the deep structures of sentences at a cost, of course of specifying features and extra transformations. For example, we could account for different kinds of determiners and singularity and plurality in noun phrases by specifying nouns for such features as [definite] and [singular] as follows :

a. NP

↓

N

↓

man

+ noun

+ animate

+ human

+ count

+ singular

+ definite

b. NP

↓

N

↓

man

+ noun

+ animate

+ human

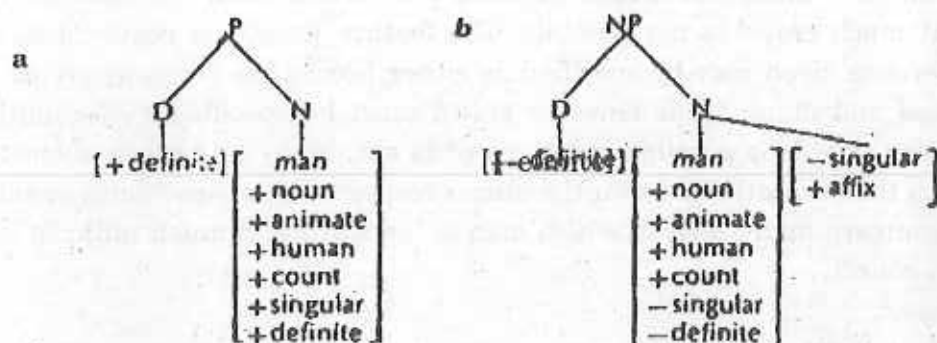
+ count

+ singular

+ definite

Then transformations would automatically rewrite the above structures to

give new structures by copying the appropriate [+definite] or [-definite] and [+singular] or [-singular] features, as follows:

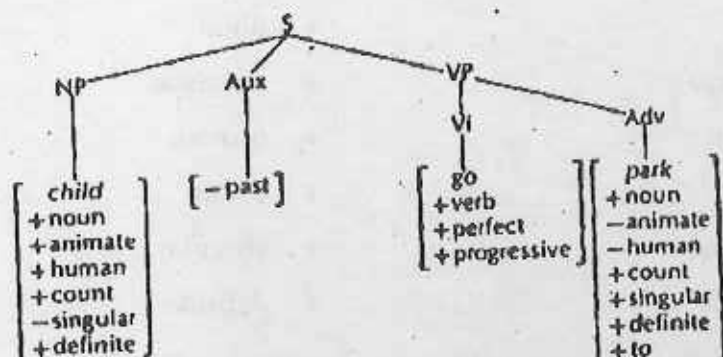


Further rules would introduce 'the' as the appropriate determiner in (a) to produce the man as the NP and 'some' as the appropriate determiner in (b) to produce some men as the NP.

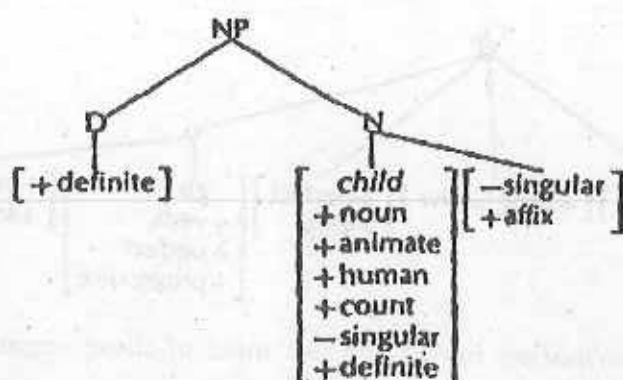
Still another example may be useful in showing how we can use features and transformations to reduce deep structure diagramming by increasing the quantity of information included in the semantic segments of the deep structure. Sentence 13 provides such an example.

13. The children have been going to the park.

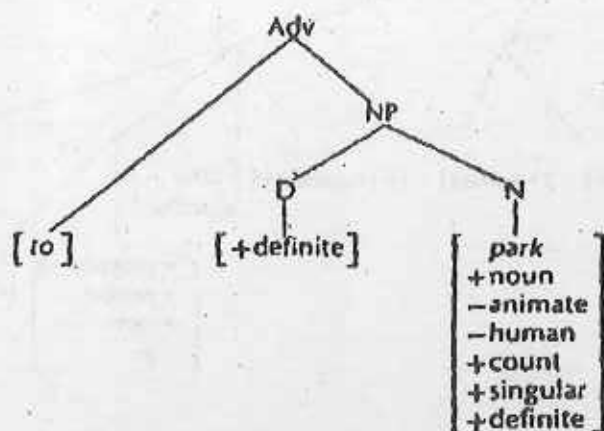
In addition to the specifications which we have already discussed for NP3 we can specify tense as [+past], that is, as either [+past] or [-past], and the Vi of the verb phrase as [+perfect] and [+progressive]. We can also specify the Adv as a noun (park) with certain features, among which is the preposition 'to' :



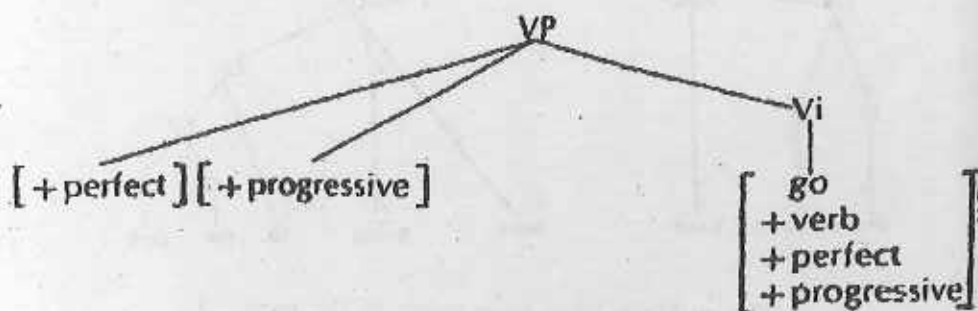
Various transformations applying to the segments allow us to rewrite the [+definite] and [-singular] features under NP, as follows :



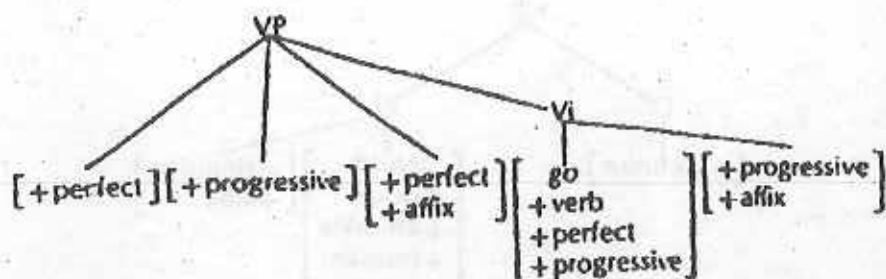
The rewriting of the features under Adv results in the following structure :



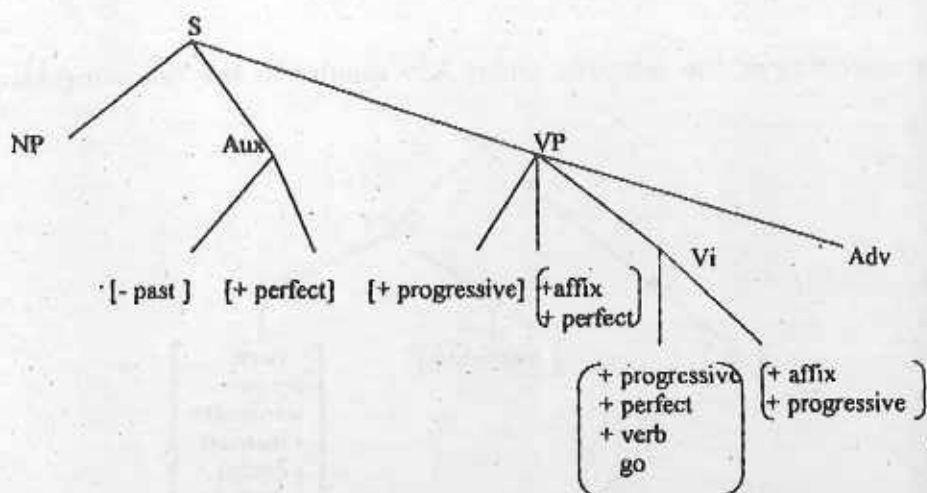
The rewriting of the remaining features under VP is more complicated. First of all, the [+perfect] and [+progressive] features result in new segments with [-perfect] moved to the 'left' of [+progressive] :



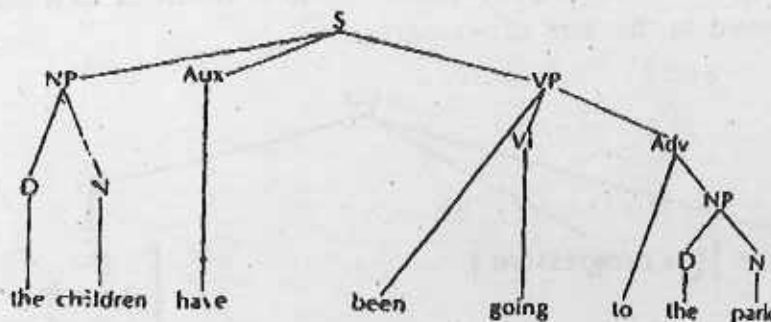
Another transformation assigns the affixes which accompany [+perfect] and [+progressive] and automatically "hops" them, just as the affix transformation did in pages 312-13 :



A later transformation moves the left most of these segments under Aux :



The final surface structure results after all the necessary words and affixes are introduced and the affixes are attached to words by still other transformations:



The children have been going to the park.



The transformations manifest the features that are present in any deep structure as either full words or inflections on these words, and arrange these in their proper positions in the surface structure. At each point the structures intermediate between the deep and surface structures are preserved because transformations apply to structures – syntactic structures, or segment structures, but not to the actual words or features themselves. Transformations are both structure-preserving and meaning-preserving.

### Semantic Readings

Feature notation leaves many problems unsolved. One of them is that of specifying how the meanings of individual features and words somehow add up to produce the meanings of the total sentences. Some linguists have postulated the need for a set of rules to accomplish this goal. Such a set would specify the combinatorial possibilities of individual meanings and offer interpretations for the possible combinations. The rules called **semantic projection rules**, would provide semantic interpretations for syntactic structures into which meaning units had been inserted at some point or points. The meaning units themselves would be introduced directly, in the form of words, as were *go*, *child*, and *park* above, or in the form of features, as were [+perfect] and [-singular] above, or in the form of idioms, as for example, *kick the bucket*, *way out*, and *fast and loose*. The syntax is the central generative component of the whole grammar, and this semantic component merely synthesizes the meaning, just as the phonological component provides the sound.

Within linguistics the above approach has often been called an interpretative approach. Since one of its principal advocates is Noam Chomsky, the originator of generative transformational theory, it is sometimes referred to as either the extended standard theory or interpretative semantics.

### GENERATIVE SEMANTICS

An alternative approach to making semantics interpretative is possible. It is to make semantics generative. Such a solution makes the semantic component the generative component and the syntactic component interpretative. Consequently, the deep structure of a sentence is a semantic structure rather than a syntactic one and syntactic restrictions and arrangements are completely determined by the semantic structure. This approach is known as Generative Semantics.

Such an arrangement has several advantages. The first advantage is the intuitive appeal of such a system; speakers put meanings into sentence form.

and the meanings they want to express may be said to determine the specific sentence forms that are chosen, rather than vice versa. A further weakness of keeping the syntax central is the generation of deep structures which cannot be allowed to become surface structures, for example, deep structures containing **Imp** but not *you* or *will*. Such structures must be prevented from becoming sentences by rules which reject, or block, the structures. Making the semantics generative has the advantage of avoiding a counterintuitive "blocking". The final advantage is that certain paraphrase relationships are stated rather easily within a generative semantics but not at all or only with considerable virtuosity within a generative syntax. For example, sentences 14 and 15 have the same meaning.

14. His resistance to the idea surprised me.

15. It surprised me that he resisted the idea.

In interpretative semantics it might be possible to show the similarity in meaning by allowing alternative stylistic variations from a single deep structure. However, such a solution is difficult to advance for sentences 16 and 17, which have quite different surface forms but the same meaning :

16. His operation was a success.

17. He operated successfully.

Sentences 18 and 19 are different in meaning from sentence 17 but show another possible meaning for 16.

18. The operation on him was a success.

19. He was operated on successfully.

Sentences 18 and 19 are also synonymous. What seems to be required are two abstract semantic structures which express the semantic relationships, one of sentences 16 and 17 and the other of sentences 18 and 19. These abstract semantic structures can then be realized syntactically in different ways.

## CASE GRAMMAR

Sentences 20 to 23 can be used to illustrate some of the possibilities of another approach, known as case grammar :

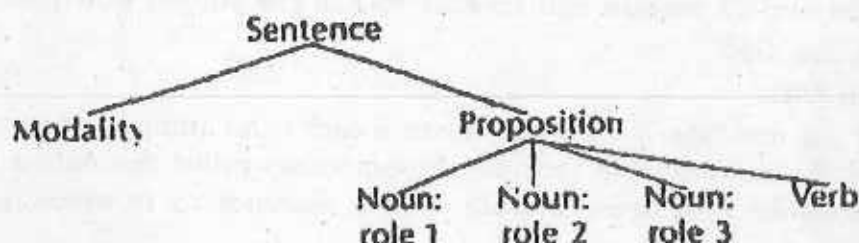
20. The janitor opened the door.

21. The key opened the door.

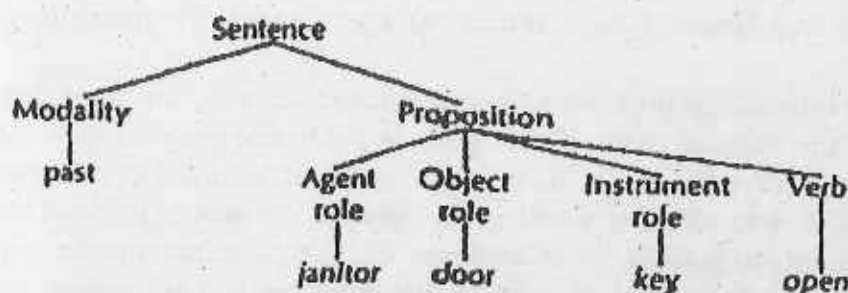
22. The janitor opened the door with the key.

23. The door opened.

From sentences 20 to 23 we note that the verb open can co-occur with certain nouns and some indication of time (or modality). A sentence, therefore, may be considered to have three elements (arguments) of modality: one or more nouns (or roles) in a propositional relationship to a verb, and that verb.



In sentences 20 through 23 *janitor* fills an agent role, *door* an object role, and *key* an instrument role in conjunction with "Past" modality and the verb *open*. The verb open required the object role to be filled does not require the other roles to be filled : something must open or be opened. If only the object role is filled, then sentence 23 results. If both the agent and object roles are filled, then either sentence 20 or sentence 24 results.



24. The door was opened by the janitor.

If only the object and instrument roles are filled, then sentence 21 results. If all three roles are filled, either sentence 22 or sentence 25 results.

25. The door was opened with the key by the janitor.

This approach produces some interesting problems. For example, one problem involves the relationship between roles and grammatical functions. Although *janitor* is in an agent role in 20 and 22 and *key* is in an instrument role in 21, both are the grammatical subjects of *opened*, as is *door*, in an object role, in 23. The grammatical subject function, therefore can be filled by very different roles. Sentence 26 and 27 contain still another role in the subject function.

26. The dog died.

27. John left.

Neither dog nor John is an agent : instead each is an animate noun somehow affected by the action of the verb, a role sometimes called the dative role. We can compare John in sentence 27 with John in sentence 28, in which it is in an agent role :

28. John tore the book.

Only a few of the possible roles have been illustrated here. How many roles are necessary is still undecided, but investigations have shown that certain interesting restrictions occur among the roles that are known to exist. For example, sentence 29 can be interpreted only as meaning that both John and he brick broke the window by both coming into contact with it, even though sentences 30 and 31 are possible :

29. John and the brick broke the window.

30. John broke the window.

31. The brick broke the window.

Consequently, in sentence 29 both John and brick must have the same role, in this case instrument : John cannot be agent and brick instrument in this sentence.

Another interesting problem arises in connection with the prepositions that occur with the various roles. If the agent is made the grammatical object of a sentence, it is preceded by *by*, as in sentence 24. If both object and instrument roles are filled, regardless of whether the agent is present or not and object role is the grammatical subject, as in sentence 25, then the instrument is preceded by *with*. A definite system of relationship appears to exist among particular prepositions, particular roles, and particular grammatical functions in surface structures.

This kind of grammar can be used to reveal similarities among certain words, for example between *die* and *kill*. *Die* allows for only a single dative role, as in sentence 26 : The dog died. However, the requirements for *kill* are obligatorily a dative and optionally an agent and an instrument, as in sentences 32 to 37 :

32. The dog was killed. (dative)

33. The dog was killed with a knife. (dative, instrument)



34. The man killed the dog. (agent, dative)
35. The dog was killed by the man. (dative, agent)
36. The man killed the dog with a knife. (agent, dative, instrument)
37. The dog was killed with a knife by the man. (dative, instrument, agent)

#### Causation

'Kill' can also be said to mean "cause to die" so we may consider 'kill' to be the causative form of die. 'Kill' is a causative verb. We can then account for the difference in distribution between 'die' and 'kill' by the presence of the semantic element [+cause] in 'kill' but not in 'die' and possibly even understand why sentences 38 to 45 are synonymous :

38. Smoking caused Peter to die.
39. Smoking caused Peter's death.
40. Smoking killed Peter.
41. Peter's death was caused by smoking.
42. Peter was killed by smoking.
43. Peter's smoking killed him.
44. Peter died from smoking.
45. Peter smoked himself to death.

The word *possibly* is deliberately used, because it is not easy to find principles which clearly demarcate where postulating interesting and productive structural similarities ends and creating scholastic monstrosities begins.

However, the causative-noncausative distinction is useful in describing how many verbs . . . Verbs like lengthen, shorten, and widen even have an overt causative marker in the -en suffix, as a sentence such as *He shortened the rope*. If someone flies a plane, the plane flies because that person "causes" it to fly. This applies also to verbs like burn (a book), sink (a ship), open (a door), fill (a can), bounce (a ball), and stop (a fight). But if someone sweeps a floor, the floor does not sweep. Likewise, with take (a book), toss (a ball), strike (a wall), and open (a box). Whereas *He opened the door and the window* is satisfactory (The door opened, The window opened), *He opened the door and the box* is somewhat bizarre because of the conjunction of a causative construction (The door opened) and a noncausative construction (The box opened).

Such explanatory possibilities are in many cases extremely valuable. For example, sentences 46 and 47 are possible, but sentences 48 and 49 are not :

46. The boy is sad.



47. The movie is sad.

48. \* The boy and the movie are sad.

49. \* The boy is as sad as the movie he saw.

Sentence 47 contains a causative verb because *The movie is sad* means something like "The movie causes people to be sad." Sentence 48 is disallowed because a causative construction is once more conjoined to a noncausative one, and sentence 49 is disallowed because a comparison construction does not allow for the conjoining of two such disparate constructions.

## Negation

A multitude of other problems exists in connection with any study of meaning. A few further examples will serve to show some of the variety of these problems. Sentence 50 is ambiguous :

50. John doesn't beat his wife because he loves her.

Sentence 50 can mean either that John doesn't beat his wife at all being too much in love with her to do so, or that he does beat her, but for a reason other than that he loves her. The ambiguity resides in what may be called the "scope of the negative," that is, in what exactly is being negated in the sentence. We should note that corresponding positive sentence 51 is unambiguous : in sentence 51 either John, or his wife, or both, need psychiatric help.

51. John beats his wife because he loves her.

Sentence 52, containing a negative is likewise ambiguous, but the corresponding positive sentence 53 is unambiguous :

52. John won't speak until ten o'clock.

(because Fred will be speaking until then).

(because he has to finish at 9.45).

53. John will speak until ten o'clock.

We should also note that the negative sentence 54 does not have a corresponding positive sentence like 55 :

54. John didn't die until five o'clock.

55. \*John died until five o'clock.

Likewise, there is no \* John budged, to match 'John didn't budge'. Negation, particularly as it concerns the scope of negatives, would appear to be an interesting area in which to investigate problems of meaning.

## Presupposition

A sentence such as 56 presupposes that the team in question played in the World Series in 1975 :

56. The Yankees lost the 1975 World Series.

However, sentence 57 contains no such presupposition :

57. The Yankees didn't lose the 1975 World Series.

In this case, the problem does not involve the scope of the negation but concerns the real-world conditions that must exist to make the sentences acceptable in meaning. Sentence 56 can be used only if the Yankees played in the 1975 World Series, but sentence 57 can be used whether or not they played. Sentence 56 means the Yankees played and lost, but sentence 57 can mean either that they played in and won the 1975 World Series or that they did not lose the 1975 World Series because they did not play in it. This area of presupposition is also of interest to some linguists because the acceptability of sentences depends to some extent on the claims that sentences must be making about the world because of their structures. A person cannot confess to something that was never done or never felt by someone to have been done, or for someone else's doing something :

58. \* I confessed to being 250 years old.

59. \* I confessed to John's committing the crime.

Nor can one answer the question in 60 unless he agrees with the basic presupposition that he has indeed been beating his wife :

60. Have you stopped beating your wife?

Two important principles are generally recognized : the first that sentences must be interpreted in context; the second that some of the restrictions on the meanings of sentences are cognitive ones. Context disambiguates sentences. We must remember that most sentences are ambiguous out of context if for no other reason than that exact referents of many of the words are unknown. But context also makes sentences appropriate or inappropriate, as in the "requests" contained in sentences 61 to 65 :

61. Shut the door !

62. Please shut the door !

63. Would you mind shutting the door for me ?

64. I wonder if you would mind shutting the door for me.

65. It's cold in here !

More and more it appears that pragmatic considerations, such as the actual contexts in which words and sentences are used, have important linguistic consequences.

Because speakers and listeners use language, their cognitive abilities are also important. What speakers and listeners can remember, produce, and process takes on significance. A sentence such as 66 :

66. The halfback the coach the students revered liked scored a touchdown is hard to understand because of the way in which the clauses are embedded within each other. However, the addition of a pair of *that's* helps to break up the three initial NPs, as in 67 :

67. The halfback *that's* the coach *that* the students revered scored a touchdown.

These pronouns help the listener understand what is going on in the sentence by reducing the cognitive burden of the structure. Apparently, human cognitive limitations lead to languages "employing" such devices as relative pronouns and restrictions on the variety of different types of surface structure. Certain syntactic constraints therefore have a cognitive basis : only certain linguistic possibilities exist because people could not possibly cope with anything and everything that might be possible.

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## 15.7 Let us sum up

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It is very difficult to find a satisfactory definition of 'meaning'. It is also difficult to define the term *concept* as a word can be associated with different images for different people.

**Elements of meaning** — Leech breaks down 'meaning' into seven types:

- (i) conceptual meaning
- (ii) connotative meaning
- (iii) stylistic meaning
- (iv) affective meaning
- (v) reflected meaning
- (vi) collocative meaning
- (vii) thematic meaning

### Sources of meaning

The following are to be considered :

lexical meaning

grammatical or syntactic meaning  
intonational meaning  
utterance meaning

### Meaning Relations

There is a difference between descriptive meaning and non-descriptive meaning of speech acts. The differences between the following are to be considered :

Homonymy and Polysemy

Antonymy and Hyponymy

### Generative transformational grammar

This is a theory of grammar which was proposed by the American linguist Chomsky in 1957. Chomsky attempted to provide a model for the description of all languages. A generative transformational grammar tries to show, with a system of rules, the knowledge which a native speaker of a language uses in forming grammatical sentences.

Chomsky has changed his theory over the years. The most well-known version was published in his book *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* in 1965. It is often referred to as the **Aspects Model** or **Standard Theory**. This model consists of four main parts :

(a) the **base component** which produces or generates basic syntactic structures called **deep structures**.

(b) The **transformational component** which changes or transforms these basic structures into sentences called **surface structures**.

(c) The **phonological component** which gives sentences a phonetic representation so that they can be pronounced.

(d) The semantic component which deals with the meaning of sentences.

Chomsky and others later modified the Aspects Model. They felt that not only the base component but also the transformational and phonological components had some effect on the semantic interpretation of a sentence.

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## 15.8 Comprehension Exercises

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1. Explain and exemplify the principal kinds of meaning.
2. What distinction, if any, would you draw between homonymy and polysemy?
3. Explain and exemplify antonymy and hyponymy.

4. What distinction would you draw between conceptual and connotative meaning?

5. What is descriptive synonymy?

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## 15.9 Activities

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1. What does good mean in each of the following expressions?

- (i) good assignment
- (ii) good beating
- (iii) good knife
- (iv) good idea
- (v) good music
- (vi) good parents
- (vii) good tickets
- (viii) good rate
- (ix) good reason
- (x) good results
- (xi) good woman
- (xii) a good win
- (xiii) a good cup of coffee

2. Each of the following adjectives has at least two antonyms; *bright, fair, light; rich, right*. Use each adjective in two sentences to show the different meanings. Then use the antonyms of each meaning in two further sentences.

3. Examples of descriptive synonyms in English are father, daddy, pop etc. Can you extend this list?

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## 15.10 Glossary

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**Concept** : the general idea or meaning which is associated with a word or symbol in a person's mind. Concepts are abstract meanings which words and other linguistic items represent. The forming of concepts is closely related to language acquisition and the use of concepts to form propositions is basic to human thought and communication.

**Discourse** : a general term for examples of language use that is language which has been produced as the result of an act of communication. Discourse may refer to units of language such as paragraphs, conversations and interviews.

**Encoding** : the process of turning a message into a set of symbols as part



of the act of communication.

**Decoding** : the process of trying to understand the meaning of a word, phrase or sentence.

**Denotation** : that part of the meaning of a word or phrase that relates it to phenomena in the real world or in a fictional world or possible world. For example, the denotation of the English word *bird* is a two-legged, winged, egg-laying, warm blooded creature with a beak. In a meaning system, denotative meaning may be regarded as the central meaning or core meaning of a lexical item.

**Connotation** : the additional meanings that a word or phrase has beyond its central meaning. For example, a child could be defined as a young human being but there are many other characteristics that different people associate with child like affectionate, amusing, lovable, mischievous etc.

**Lexeme** : the smallest unit in the meaning system of a language that can be distinguished from other similar units. A lexeme is an abstract unit. It can occur in many different forms in actual spoken or written sentences and is regarded as the same lexeme even when inflected. For example, in English, all inflected forms such as give, gives, given, giving, gave would belong to the one lexeme give.

**Speech act** : an utterance as a functional unit in a communication. In speech act theory, utterances have two kinds of meaning :

(a) propositional meaning or locutionary meaning – the basic literal meaning of the utterance conveyed by the particular words and structures contained in the utterance.

(b) Illocutionary meaning – this is the effect the utterance or written text has on the reader or listener.

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## **Unit 16 □ Genre Analysis**

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### **Structure**

- 16.0 Objectives**
- 16.1 Introduction**
- 16.2 The Concept of Genre**
  - 16.2.1 Genre in literary studies**
  - 16.2.2 Genre in linguistics**
  - 16.2.3 A working definition of Genre**
- 16.3 Features of Genre**
  - 16.3.1 Genre and Schemata**
- 16.4 Genre Analysis - Pedagogical implications**
- 16.5 The Genre-based Approach**
- 16.6 The Value of Genre analysis to teachers**
- 16.7 Let us sum up**
- 16.8 Glossary**
- 16.9 Review Questions**
- 16.10 Bibliography**

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### **16.0 Objectives**

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This unit will help you understand the role of language in academic contexts at tertiary levels. Various types of discourse and rhetorical styles used in different settings will be explored to determine whether these are unique to a given language or whether they enjoy universal characteristics. By the end of the unit you will have a clear understanding of how language is used universally or in a particular discourse community for literary or functional purposes. This unit will also help you associate and perceive Genre Analysis in the context of Applied Linguistics.

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### **16.1 Introduction**

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Any description of language necessitates detailed description of all properties of language at various levels of analysis. In the previous units we discussed the

syntactical, phonological, discorsal and societal aspects of a language as it is used in special linguistic environments. This unit will discuss the **rhetorical features** of both spoken and written language in the context of its content and use. This means there will be exhaustive exploration into text types or genres typified by their linguistic and rhetorical features.

The value of this study is that readers and writers will be familiar with both the content and structure of different text types. The issues addressed in this section will lead to a clarification of:

- what exactly is genre
- various types of genres
- features of particular genres
- problems of defining genre
- pedagogical applications of genre analysis.

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## 16.2 The Concept of Genre

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Let's begin by discussing what we mean by the term 'genre'. According to M.H. Abrams, genre is '*a term, French in origin, that denotes a recurring type of literature, or ... a literary form.*' The more common literary forms are the novel, the lyric, the drama etc.

In modification of this restrictive view, the more current observation is that *genre is quite simply used to refer to a distinctive category of discourse of any text type, spoken or written with or without literary aspiration.* That is to say, press conferences, TV interviews, game shows on TV, chat sessions etc. are all accepted as samples of particular genres. Let us first look at genre from the literary aspect.

### 16.2.1 Genre in Literary studies

Works of literature have, at different times, been classified into various genres. Since the writings of Aristotle and Plato, literary works have been divided into three main classes - the **epic**, the **drama** and the **lyric**. Many of the ancient classifications such as **epic**, **tragedy**, **comedy** are still in current use. More recent additions to ancient genres are the **novel**, the **biography** and the **essay**.

Throughout the Renaissance and the 18<sup>th</sup> century, genres were thought to be fixed literary types much like a particular species of nature. Many critics held the opinion that the rules of a particular type were specific and no mixing of genres was to be entertained.

Genres were classified also according to hierarchy during this period, i.e. according to social status. The *epic* and *tragedy*, the highest genres, were confined to the uppermost strata of society, i.e. dealing with characters from the highest

social classes who also spoke in a *high* style. The *pastoral*, the *short lyric* and the *epigram* were considered to be minor genres fit for the peasant and the rustic at the bottom of the social scale. This concept came in for a lot of criticism. To quote Abrams, 'Shakespeare satirized the pedantic classifiers of his era in ... *Hamlet* (II, ii) where the different types of drama are classified as *tragedy*, *comedy*, *history*, *pastoral*, *pastoral-comical*, *historical-pastoral*, *tragical-historical*, *tragical-comical-historical-pastoral* ...'.

In the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the notion of fixity and stability in genres weakened. Both novels and poems combined natural descriptions, philosophy and narrative, for example James Thompson's *Seasons*. The *lyric* assumed great importance and found a place at the top in the later part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw further changes in the conception of genres. From the Romantic period there was an extraordinary rise of the *lyric* and it replaced *tragedy* as the quintessence of the poetic type. The generic conception of literature underwent a drastic change and the notion of certain common criteria applicable to *all* literary types was developing. Extra-generic considerations such as *sincerity*, *intensity* etc. were used for evaluating works of literature.

In current literary theory the very term 'genre' is outmoded. For most critics of the present times, genres are widely conceived to be convenient but arbitrary ways of classifying literature. Each piece of literary work is supposed to be unique in its structure. Conventions about particular literary forms have been largely done away with. Today the concept of genre has been expanded and modified.

However, some critics have applied the concept of *family resemblance* in particular genres suggested by the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. This suggests that a set of literary works is loosely grouped together as a family. Members of a particular genre might exhibit some family resemblance but no essential defining features. For example, all novels have particular features that distinguish them from poems, short stories and one-act plays and full-length dramas etc.

Today new theories considering both the **reader** and the **writer** have developed in genre studies. For example, a competent reader can appreciate a piece of literature if he is familiar with the genre. In case of a new or modified genre, he should be able to recognize what has been modified or rejected (for example, a novelette or a poetic novel). According to the structuralist critic Todorov (1976), a new genre is always a modification of an old one. He does not accept the notion that genres are classes of texts. He argues that a genre is nothing but the codification of certain properties of language. A genre usually provides a frame for any work of art. This frame is as much textual as it is cultural, historical, socio-economic or political. For instance, if any of Shakespeare's dramas



is compared with a modern one there will be a marked difference in the speech events, the mental states of the characters, the dress code, the social space as the backdrop of the action etc. These considerations are likely to have influenced both the reader and writer of the respective periods.

Fowler (1982) stresses the value of genre to the writer. According to him, "*Genres are a positive support for the writer. They give him space to write in literary frame by which to order his experience during composition ... . Genre also offers a challenge by provoking a free spirit to transcend the limitations of previous examples.*" Therefore genre analysis is valuable because it is clarificatory, not classificatory. It provides a common system for the use of the writer in writing and for the reader in reading, understanding and interpreting a text.

There have been a few misconceptions about the theory of genres. Critics argue that

- it is of little relevance because it does not correspond with all literary works
- there is heavy prescription and little imitation
- the notion of hierarchies is highly conservative
- by the time a genre is described it becomes obsolete.

### 16.2.2 Genre in linguistics

Linguists have varied opinions of 'genre'. Historically, language analyses for specific purposes involved studies of linguistic properties of functional varieties or registers. In the previous units we discussed language registers. Studies have led to such labels as *scientific, legal, medical, newspaper* and *technical English*, to mention just a few. Critics argue that this kind of classification can be misleading since the label focuses merely on content at the cost of different communicative purposes. For example, in medical English, the language of the doctor's prescription is not the same as the warning on a medicine bottle. Yet both texts are labelled Medical English. The same is the case with Technical English. A text giving a description and specification of a particular computer will be very different from a set of instructions for its use. Yet, both will be written in Technical English. So, one should not confuse *English for Special purposes* with *genre*.

**Genre and Register** – It is perhaps important here to refer to the concept of *register*. In the previous unit we discussed this in detail. The distinction between *register* and *genre* is not always very clear. Register refers to the *functional* aspects of language use. There is correlation of linguistic items with recurrent situational features in terms of *Field, Mode* and *Tenor*. Let us once again clarify our notions of these terms.

*Field* indicates the type of activity in which the discourse operates, for example, activities related to science, medicine, law or the classroom etc.



*Mode* is concerned with the channel of communication, i.e. speech or writing.

*Tenor* is the addressor-addressee relationship, i.e. formal, informal, casual or intimate. All three variables collectively operate in determining the *register* of a piece of language. These categories provide the conceptual framework for analysis. They are not themselves kinds of language use (Swales 1990).

It was as late as 1985 that the concept of genre was found to be different from register. According to Martin (1985 : 250) genres are how things get done through language. They range from literary to nonliterary forms : *poems, narratives, expositions, lectures, seminars, recipes, manuals, service encounters, making appointments, radio broadcasts, news bulletins, TV anchoring* etc. The term genre is used to embrace each of these linguistically realized activity types. Martin suggests that genre is a system that embraces register. That is to say, particular contexts and particular societies have particular conventions of combining the variables of *field, mode* and *tenor*. For instance, a topic like communication skills might be suitable for a lecture but unsuitable for an informal conversation between unequals. Again a language form like *How are you?* might be used in a literary sense in a particular context or it might be just another way of greeting somebody familiar in another context.

Today it is recognized that genres have a discourse structure, i.e. a beginning, a middle and an end. Registers do not even suggest any holistic text. They classify and clarify the use of vocabulary and syntax in a text whereas genres are constrained by the discourse structure of the text. Genres are complete structured texts (*business reports, research findings, government notices* etc.) while registers (*language of newspaper reporting, official bureaucratic letters* etc.) represent more general styles of writing chosen by the user.

### 16.2.3 A working Definition of Genre

One can say, while summing up, that genre in linguistics relates to

(a) goal-directed communication (with communicative purpose) (say, *government notices with the definite goal of warning employees about late-coming*)

(b) a variety of discourse structure (the varying *features* of reports, notices etc. which help in classifying them as members of a *particular type* of language use)

(c) a different viewpoint from register or style.

For a working definition of genre one can quote Swales (1990)

*"Genres are themselves communicative events which typically possess features of stability, name recognition and so on. In consequence, genres are properties of*

discourse communities ... not individuals ... . Genre-type communicative events consist of texts themselves (spoken or written or a combination of both) plus encoding and decoding procedures as moderated by genre related aspects of text-role and text-environment."

The questions that might arise now are :

*If all genres have definite communicative purposes, are all communicative events instances of particular genres?*

*Is genre a particular way of constructing texts?*

*Is genre a mere mechanism for using language?*

All these issues will be discussed in the following sections.

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## 16.3 Features of Genre

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The major issue to be discussed in this section is "How do we identify a text to be a poem, a novel or a news-bulletin or a research paper or as belonging to a particular genre?" How do we know whether the text is spoken or written? In other words, are there distinguishing features of texts which help us to identify the genre? Do genres vary according to the anticipated reader?

Let us now study a few texts and identify the genre of each using our genre skills.

### Text A

BB 117 Sector I

Salt Lake City,

Kolkata 700 064.

Dated 7th April 2002.

The Advertiser,

Box No. ED 1135

The Statesman,

Kolkata 700 001

Sir/Madam,

Sub : Post of a teacher in English.

With reference to your advertisement in 'The Statesman' dated 7th April 2002 for the above post, I would like to present myself as a candidate for the same.

Attached to this letter are the details of my personal and academic particulars for your kind perusal. I look forward to appearing for an interview and serving you in all sincerity if selected for the post.

Yours faithfully

PRITHA CHATTERJEE

### Text B

According to Ms. Sulagna Roy, a lead social worker at CINI-Asha, the organization's goal, admittedly ambitious, is to mainstream the street children. This involves establishing a relationship of trust with them, providing them with a safe and supportive atmosphere, imparting learning skills and teaching them subject matter so that they will be ready for school at a level appropriate to their age, placing them in schools that are willing to accept them and are sensitized to their special needs, monitoring them through school, and in the end, finding jobs for them after school. Every step in this plan is fraught with difficulty and perhaps the hardest step is the first, the building of trust in the children. Since these children have often been abused by adult members of their families, and since they are constantly harassed and abused by a range of adults as they try to survive on the streets, they are mistrustful of just about everybody. Yet, CINI-Asha's workers are undaunted; they feel that even one child in hundreds that is mainstreamed is worth their efforts, and what is more, that just spreading awareness among the street children that a better life is possible is itself worth their while.

CINI-Asha chooses to focus on kids in Central Kolkata, a zone with a high level of economic activity, and a natural magnet for many street children. Kali took Prabha and me one evening to visit three of CINI-Asha's bases. It was one of the most moving evenings of my life.

### Text C

#### INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

*This is to certify that*

*Master/Miss .....*

*of*

*.....*

*participated in the Seminar-Workshop*

*held on 22 November, '02*

A close look at the texts will suggest that Text A is a letter of application, B is an informative report and C is a certificate of attendance.

What helped us to identify the genre? It is evident that features like format, syntax, vocabulary etc. are the more common identifying features rather than field, mode or tenor.

In addition to all this are the functional purposes, the possible readers of

each text (*For whom is the text written?*), the organization of each text and the context of the discourse.

The recognition of genre is the recognition of the *communicative purpose* of the text in a particular environment. Let us now analyse each text.

*Text A* is a letter of application in response to an advertisement. This is suggested by the salutation, the addressee, the block style etc. The communicative purpose is to provide information about oneself in response to the needs of a specific agency. It is going to be read by the advertiser.

*Text B* is a report of a visit to a centre prepared by a social worker. This is evident from the introduction, the formal tone, the use of the non-finite verb forms used as nouns (gerunds), the length of the sentences, the combination of both the impersonal (at the introductory and middle stages) and the personal tones (at the end) and of course, the sentence connectors marking the discursal elements in the text. The communicative purpose is to provide information for public consumption and promotion.

*Text C* is the format for a certificate of attendance and participation. The indicators are the format, the impersonal tenor, the specific details of the programme attended. The communicative purpose is to certify and inform the person concerned.

Having used genre skills for analysing the texts, it is to be noted that emphasis today is given to:

- genres as types of goal-directed communicative events
- genres as having schematic structures
- genres as inclusive of registers or styles.

It is, of course, true that the notion of rhetorical structure differs from language to language and much of the research work that has been done is based on expository prose. Different languages have different kinds of preferences for certain kinds of discourse patterns. Most English expository prose has a certain linear rhetorical pattern: "... a clearly defined topic introduction, body, which explicates all but nothing more than the stated topic, paragraphs which chain from one to the next and a conclusion which tells the reader what has been discussed ... no digression, however interesting, is permitted on the grounds that it would violate unity." (Kaplan & Ostler, 1982).

Prof. Widdowson is a strong advocate of the universal hypothesis claiming :

*"Scientific exposition is structured according to certain patterns of rhetorical organisation which, with some tolerance for individual stylistic variation, imposes rules of conformity on members of the scientific community, no matter what language they happen to use."*



Genres vary significantly along a number of different parameters. They vary according to rhetorical purpose (a recipe? a political speech?) and construction and preparation of exemplars or typical examples. It must be kept in mind that all exemplars do not match actual language use, e.g. typically prepared genres are written texts like research papers, letters of reference and condolence, poems, recipes and news broadcasts etc.

Unstructured genres are spoken samples like arguments, rows, quarrels and general conversations, textual samples of which might be very different from actual samples. They also vary according to the mode or medium through which these are expressed – speech or writing, and the extent to which they are likely to exhibit universal or language specific tendencies.

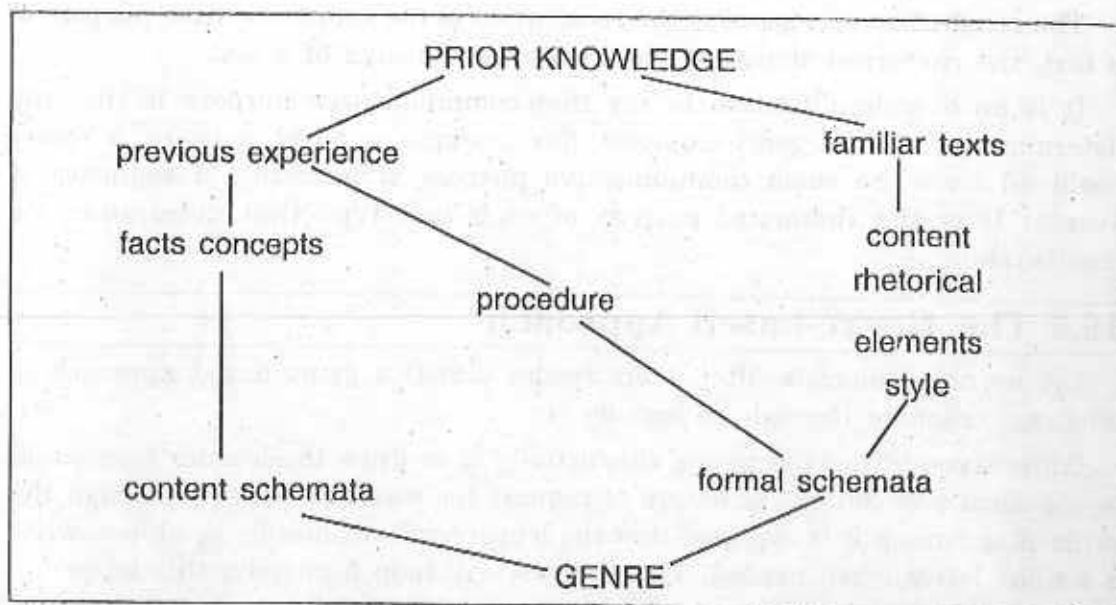
For example, different communities have different ways of greeting or presenting marriage proposals. But diplomatic press communique has a global convention. This proves that ethnographic factors influence genre. This, in turn, is related to schemata or background knowledge.

### 16.3.1 Genre and Schemata

What is *schemata*? The concept of schemata was introduced by Bartlett in 1932 to explain how information carried in stories is rearranged in the memories of readers or listeners to fit in with their expectations and prior knowledge. But, what is prior knowledge? It concerns our direct experience of life and its manifold activities and our assimilated verbal experience and encounters. That is to say, most readers are familiar with the format, layout, tone, linguistic properties of specific text-types available within the discourse community. For example, a sentence like 'Ye dil maange more' will be recognized by most readers or listeners in India as a punchline for an advertisement. Now such sentences would not be comprehensible to a reader in some other country where the Indian language is not used although advertisements might be a familiar genre. Hence the relevance of *ethnographic studies in relation to genre studies* cannot be ignored.

Most critics would argue that genre is inextricably linked with culture. There is strong evidence to show that even 4-year olds have sufficient content knowledge and knowledge of conversational structure to carry on interaction in the social world. Children acquire genre skills rather early because they are able to internalize models of language which have been provided through repeated conversational interactions. Some of these genres are *bedtime stories, nursery rhymes, role plays of teacher-student or parent-child types*. A child in a preparatory class will be able to differentiate a story book from a book on alphabet recognition or numbers, provided he or she has been exposed to the contents through recognition and practice. This is evidence of the relationship between schemata and genre. The diagram below will illustrate how prior knowledge and genre are related.





Our previous experience of life with all facts and opinions lead to an understanding of the **content** of a text. Our experience with texts (oral and written) along with their information structures, rhetorical elements and style also lead to our understanding of the **text types** and the formal aspects of the texts. Both these make up the genre.

## 16.4 Genre Analysis — Pedagogical implications

How are genre studies relevant or specific to pedagogy or teaching? We need to explore the parameters of the *genre-based approach to language teaching*. This approach owes a substantial debt to work in both applied and non-applied fields.

The functional properties of language and varieties of language are considered for this approach. The problem is that very often the actual properties of communicative events in the real world are ignored.

With the introduction of communicative language teaching, *tasks* have assumed great importance. Tasks are seen as having communicative outcomes, just as genres are seen as having communicative purposes and discourses are seen as having communicative goals. Development of communicative competence and use of the skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing is the ultimate objective of these approaches. Some of the main considerations are :

Specific genres are suitable for the development of specific skills. For example, news broadcasts and stories would be used in a Listening class while newspaper reports would be used in Reading or Writing classes.

The recognition of a genre is the recognition of the communicative purpose of a text, the rhetorical structure, the discoursal features of a text.

It is an oversimplification to say that communicative purpose is the only determining factor in genre analysis. For example, a novel, a poem, a report could all have the same communicative purpose of narrating a sequence of events. It is the rhetorical pattern of each text type that determines its membership.

## 16.5 The Genre-based Approach

Let us now illustrate after John Swales (1983) a genre-based approach to language teaching through an activity.

**Objectives :** The objective of this activity is to draw the learner's attention to the form and content of letters of request for research papers, through the skills of scanning. It is expected that the learner will ultimately be able to write a similar letter when needed. The analysis will help him write this letter.

**Teacher Activity :** Distribute three short letters of request for papers. Let us suppose these are the texts A, B, and C given below:

(A)

Address

Dear Dr ...

*I have seen a summary of your work on ... in the Science Journal dated ... . I am interested in a longer reprint that you could let me have if ... is back in Kolkata. Please give him my regards.*

*Sincerely*

(B)

Address

Dear Professor ...

*I've come across a reference to one of your publications which, unfortunately is not available in either the ... or the ... libraries. From the title I feel that we are thinking along the same lines regarding ... . I would most appreciate if you could send me a copy of the following article:*

*Thank you very much.*

*Sincerely*

(C)

Address

Dear Dr ....

.... suggested that I write to you and request a copy of some of your recent work, which by all reports would be of much interest to me. In the meantime I enclose a copy of my ... paper, which may be of some interest to you.

Sincerely

Get students to analyse the texts through the following tasks.

TASK ONE *In pairs discuss and answer the following questions :*

1. A and B open in a similar way. How would you describe it?
2. C opens in a different way. Who do you think made the suggestion? Do you think he is a well-known specialist? Does the status of this person matter?
3. There is another reference to a person in the three texts. Where is it? What is its function?
4. B expresses a belief that A does not. What is it?

TASK TWO (In actual fact letter A was answered slowly, letter B was answered very quickly. And letter C was never responded to at all).

1. What changes might you make to letter A to make it more effective?
2. Are there any rhetorical reasons why letter C was not answered at all ? If so, how would you change it?

Redraft in pairs.

TASK THREE (*Request-letters of this sort usually give the writer an opportunity to show that he/she is an active researcher in the field. Letter C does this by actually sending a copy of the paper. May be you feel it would be better to just offer to send a copy of your own work along with your request.*)

1. Under what circumstances would you use or not use the following?
  - (a) *I would be happy to send you an unpublished paper on a similar topic that I have recently completed.*
  - (b) *I also work in your area – would you like copies of some of my recent stuff?*
  - (c) *As it happens, I have recently completed a paper entitled '.....'. If you feel it might have a bearing on your research, I would be pleased to send you a copy.*
  - (d) *I have a strong suspicion that you might find a recent paper of mine entitled '.....' of relevance to your work. Do you want me to send you a copy?*

2. Draft a request-offer letter you might be able to use. It can be about anything – materials, software, data etc. Pay special attention to the use of would, could etc.

**TASK FOUR** Search for a few more letters. If there are any interesting features, share them with your teacher. What can we learn from them? (Adapted from Swales 1984).

These are typical tasks involving rhetorical analysis, discussion, discourse analysis, audience anticipation of texts taken from an external world which has nothing to do with actual teaching of academic English.

*What was the value of working on such a task? Let us take a close look at the tasks. It should be noted that all the texts are members of a particular genre.*

The activities are differentiated across two parameters.

(1) They involve *critique and composition in different ways. In task one there is a great demand for reading and critique. Tasks two, three and four involve both critique and composition.*

(2) The text-task synergies exercise varying degrees of control by the instructor. For example, Task 4 has less control over the learner than the other tasks since it promotes reader choice.

This is a typical example of genre analysis. As one can see, the tasks involve not only communicative competence in the widest sense but also more detailed considerations like socio-rhetorical and functional features and of course, the anticipated reader.

The *second sample* is based on a task designed by Frances Christie (2002) while working with *factual writing*. Her argument is that all texts representing factual writing do not share the same discourse structure. Christie (1999) analyses texts which are samples of factual writing. She chooses *explanations* and *reports* to show the differences in rhetorical organization although both these text types are samples of factual writing. What she means is that *genres have considerable generative power*, and to teach our students factual writing, it is necessary to have them analyse and explore such models. Let us see how she establishes this.

## EXPLANATIONS

### Text 1 How Rainbows Are Formed

*Rainbows need low sunlight and water to make one. When the light passes through rain, the light breaks up and seven colours come out. This is how rainbows are formed.*



## Text 2 Gold Mining

Over the years people have thought of many different ways of processing ore to find gold and other precious minerals. Up to now they used horses and manual strength but now there is a whole new way to process ore.

The process starts when the ore is blasted from the mine and brought up to the surface. The ore is very big when taken from the mine so before it can be processed it has to be crushed. The first stage that the ore goes through is 'primary crushing', when the ore passes through the jaw crusher, the cone crusher and finally the screen which only lets particles smaller than 10mm. pass. The small bits of ore are mixed with water to form a thick mud called slurry. The slurry passes through a series of chemical treatments. These treatments are necessary to separate the gold from waste. The slurry is pumped to a series of twelve tanks. Air is blown in and the slurry and chemicals are mixed together under high temperature in a process known as gold leaching. The gold with some waste is put into a special tank with pieces of carbon in it. Gold attaches itself to the carbon. The carbon with gold is screened out of the tank and washed with cyanide at high temperature. Smelting is the last process in gold mining, which purifies the gold to 99.9% purity. Once the gold is pure it is poured into moulds, where it cools and hardens and becomes gold bullion.

If we attempt to analyse these texts, the main features are:

- Both texts begin with single sentences. While text 1 begins with a statement about the phenomenon, text 2 uses a general thesis statement.
- Text 1 makes use of the active voice to describe a process but the use of the passive is predominant in text 2.
- Both texts follow the pattern of

### INTRODUCTION > PROCEDURE > RESULTS > DISCUSSION

An analysis such as this will be helpful for anyone attempting to do factual writing, be it a report or an explanation. The writer of the first text does not present too many points of information in his writing like the second writer but it might be said that he has a definite idea of structuring his text. The basic text structure helps us identify the text as a piece of explanation.

## Reports

Let us now look at two texts where there are marked differences in handling of text structure. Both came from the same writing situation after a class excursion to the Science museum. These have been taken from *Factual Writing* by J.R. Martin.

**(Situation :** Students at Intermediate level after a visit to the museum. There are varying degrees of competence.



**Task :** *Write about three things that interested you most at the museum.*

**Aim :** *To help students to write a report which is about the way things are in contrast to narrative writing which is about what happens next.*

We will now look at two samples of writing in response to the task and their analyses. We will have to keep in mind, most importantly, the demands of the task in terms of text structure.

**Text 3 (Student A)**

*At the museum a lot of things interested me but three things interested me the most – they were the Planetarium, the railway engines and the mineral wealth of Australia. The Planetarium is a little room with a dome roof and a Planetarium Projector with lots of seats around the projector. The way the projector works is that it can show slides, photos of Astronomy. The projector also shows the night sky with the stars, planets and the moons of the planets. It can also move everything in the sky to where it would be in the sky.*

*My second choice was the railway engines because I like trains and engines and I have a railway set. The engines interested me because of the train noises they made. I can't tell you how they work because I'm not sure.*

*My last choice was the mineral wealth of Australia because there was a board with a map of Australia on it and when you press the button of whatever you want to see, wherever it is, there will be a light there.*

**Text 4 (Student B)**

*I like the Strasburg clock because it was a real clock and it was a good clock because it had the apostles moving around. The roosters started yelling cock-a-doodle-do. Swords – I liked the swords because they were cold blunt, some were sharp. They had the gun sword. They were adugers. They had night swords too.*

The organization of text 3 is very typical of factual writing. It begins with classification followed by description. The writer uses an introductory statement in which he names three things he will write about and then he describes each in turn.

Text 4 is very different from Text 3. The writer has chosen to write about the exhibits in terms of his personal reaction to them. He introduces each exhibit by saying I liked ... . This is followed by very brief observations about the things he has chosen to focus on. This type of writing has been identified by Martin (1989) as Observation Comment. According to him, this type of structure is very commonly used by beginner writers. It will be a matter of great concern if children continue to write this way, which is immature and extremely limited in the goals it achieves. Both Francis and Martin do not take into account grammatical irregularities or spelling mistakes for this kind of analysis. This is because of pedagogical implications.

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## 16.6 The value of Genre Analysis to Teachers

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Genre analysis is helpful for teaching writing. It helps us understand the structure of texts and thus provides good models for our students.

- It gives us insights for strategies for the writer to improve his/her writing.
- It helps us to realize that writing is not all about grammar and spelling.
- This kind of analysis makes explicit what is involved in different types of writing and therefore throws light on what goes into each stage.
- It takes into account the organizational needs of any writing task.

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## 16.7 Let us sum up

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In this unit we have explored the structures of different text types and considered while doing so :

- the term 'genre' and what it implies in linguistics and literary studies
- the historical significance of genre studies;
- the social considerations that affect such studies;
- the features of different genre;
- the modes of genre analysis; and
- the value of genre analysis from a pedagogic perspective.

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## 16.8 Glossary

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**Aristotle** : Greek philosopher who was born in 384 B.C. At the age of about seventeen he went to Athens to study at the famous Academy of Plato where he later became a teacher. He is known for his discourses on Ethics, Politics and Poetics. He left the Academy after the death of Plato in 346 B.C..

**Epic** : A long narrative poem on a serious subject, told in a formal, elevated style and centred on a heroic figure on whose action depends the fate of a whole nation, tribe or any other subject. The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are epics. Milton's *Paradise Lost* is an immortal epic.

**Ethnography** : scientific description of the different human races.

**Lyric** : a short poem consisting of the utterances of a single person, which expresses a state of mind or a process of perception, thought or feeling.

**Pastoral** : Poems representing the lives of the shepherds. The originator of the pastoral was the Greek poet Theocritus of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

**Pedantic** : concerned with great value and show of academic knowledge.

**Plato** : Greek philosopher of the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. who dreamt of an ideal state as stated in his *Republic*. His works influenced Hegel, Kant and Rousseau.

**Press communiqué** : official announcement to the press.

**Rhetorical structure** : Means and devices used to pattern the use of words, syntax and discoursal features of a text.

**Satire** : form of writing holding up a person or society to ridicule or showing the foolishness of an idea or custom, a piece of writing that exposes false pretensions.

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## 16.9 Review Questions

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1. Think of your own experience of reading and writing. What are the different types of texts that you read either in your own language or in any other language? Mention a few of the text types you have been composing over the last few years.

2. What are the major components of a text that is written?

3. A dialogue composed in a textbook is very different from a real one. Do you agree?

4. What do you understand by the term 'genre'? Mention some of the current popular types of genre.

5. What were the main generic classes of the past? How were they classified? Is it true that the concept of genre has changed in modern times?

6. Think of the word 'family'. Does it have any bearing on genre?

7. In what ways can both the reader and the writer of English be affected by genre?

8. Mention some of the misconceptions regarding genre theory.

9. How is the linguistic view of genre different from the literary point of view?

10. What is the relationship between genre and register?

11. Examine a few (i) poems, (ii) letters of complaints, (iii) telephone bills, (iv) public notices. Take all the samples of a particular genre, say poems. Comment on (a) the linguistic features, (b) possible readers, (c) context of the discourse, and (d) rhetorical organization of each member of that genre. Do you find any set pattern?

12. Find out how people perform the following acts in different communities in the spoken mode : - *greeting* - *introducing formally* - *proposing marriage* - *thanking*. What is the relationship between genre and culture?

13. How is genre analysis helpful for a student of English?

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মানুষের জ্ঞান ও ভাবকে বইয়ের মধ্যে সঞ্চিত করিবার  
যে একটা প্রচুর সুবিধা আছে, সে কথা কেহই অস্বীকার  
করিতে পারে না। কিন্তু সেই সুবিধার দ্বারা মনের  
স্বাভাবিক শক্তিকে একেবারে আচ্ছন্ন করিয়া ফেলিলে  
বুদ্ধিকে বাবু করিয়া তোলা হয়।

— রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর

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**"Any system of education which ignores  
Indian conditions, requirements, history and  
sociology is too unscientific to commend  
itself to any rational support".**

— Subhas Chandra Bose

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ভারতের একটা mission আছে, একটা গৌরবময়  
ভবিষ্যৎ আছে, সেই ভবিষ্যৎ ভারতের উত্তরাধিকারী  
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অগ্রাহ্য করতে পারি, বাস্তবের নিষ্ঠুর সত্যগুলি আদর্শের  
কঠিন আঘাতে ধূলিসাৎ করতে পারি।

— সুভাষচন্দ্র বসু

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